

# BIG REVOLUTION SMALL COUNTRY

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE  
GRENADA REVOLUTION

Jay R. Mandle



THE NORTH-SOUTH PUBLISHING CO.

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**BIG REVOLUTION  
SMALL COUNTRY**

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the Grenada Revolution**

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*To those who share the vision of a democratic and socialist West  
Indian nation.*

*"The legacy of this neofascist regime for the people of our nation was a total dependence on imperialism, a reality that meant extreme poverty, characterized by massive unemployment, with more than half of the work force out of work, high malnutrition, illiteracy, backwardness, superstition, poor housing and health conditions, combined with overall economic stagnation and massive migration.*

*"Such a situation was intolerable and as such the progressive forces of our nation got together in March 1973, under the leadership of our party, the New Jewel Movement, in order to take power so as to revolutionize our economy, our politics and our society. And the most important stage in that process ended on March 13 this year when our party led a successful and popular revolution to take power in our country — a revolution that Comrade Fidel Castro has referred to both as "a successful Moncada" and "a big revolution in a small country." And from that day, our people, our government, and our party have been trying to build a new, just, free and revolutionary Grenada."*

—Maurice Bishop, "Imperialism Is Not Invincible,"  
September 6, 1979. Reprinted in Bruce Marcus and  
Michael Taber, eds., *Maurice Bishop Speaks: The  
Grenada Revolution 1979-83* (New York: Path-  
finder Press, 1983), p. 49.

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## PREFACE

This book was written while on Research Leave of Absence from Temple University in 1984. Much of the primary research was done at the University Library at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad. The underlying analysis contained in Chapter 2 was delivered in a seminar at the Department of Agricultural Economics at that university in March 1984. I benefitted greatly from the resulting discussion and comments. I would like to thank the following individuals who commented or contributed to the development of this work: Roberta Delson, Carl Dyke, Stanley Engerman, Louis Ferleger, Freddy Hill, Alistair Hughes, Dean Kaplan, Mohammed Khayum, Paul Lyons, Joan Mandle, Jon Mandle, Robert Neymeyer, Frederick Pryor, Isadore Reivich, and Beverley Steele.

## Chapter 1

# THE PLANTATION ECONOMY AND ITS AFTERMATH

The rule of the People's Revolutionary Government in Grenada was an effort to come to terms with — and overcome in that country — the poverty and cultural deprivation characteristic of the entire anglophone Caribbean.

Viewed in this light, the Grenada Revolution was not an isolated or discrete event, much less the product of the designs of the Soviet Union on the region. Throughout the West Indies, the form of social organization known as the plantation economy had left a continuing legacy of poverty and deprivation. The Grenada Revolution can best be understood as one of several efforts in the region to confront and transform that legacy.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, it was the deepest and most radical of those responses, holding out the greatest promise that, despite the thrust of West Indian history to the contrary, a society of economic growth, justice, and participation could be created. Thus it is that an assessment of the rule of the New Jewel Movement necessitates an examination of the context in which it governed. Specifically, this requires a review of how the plantation economy manifested itself in Grenada and the process by which that growth-inhibiting mode of production was dismantled.

### *The Plantation Economy*

The West Indian economist, Eric St. Cyr, has argued that "Caribbean societies are unique." He writes:

while they were established by Europeans in territory cleared of its native peoples, the new populations largely comprised forcibly transplanted peoples, and the *raison d'être* of the formation of these societies was the production of tropical staples for metropolitan markets.

Since this experience was largely confined to the Caribbean, con-

cludes St. Cyr, "these unique features of Caribbean type economy would seem to require a theory specific to its reality."<sup>2</sup>

Implicit in St. Cyr's view is the perception that models appropriate to the historical experience of other regions are not very useful in the West Indies. Specifically, the argument is that such models, in failing to place plantation agriculture and its special characteristics at their core, are unable to capture the historical dynamic of Caribbean societies. Since estate farming dominated life in the region, a model explicitly emphasizing that form of agriculture is necessary in order to analyze successfully the region's pattern of development. In this context, the objective of plantation theory is to account for the region's economic underdevelopment. It represents an attempt to explain the reasons that sustained improvements in methods of production and a diversifying of the structure of output in the region were achieved only to a limited extent.<sup>3</sup>

Plantation agriculture involves the large-scale production of agricultural commodities, generally for export markets. In this form of farming, large numbers of undifferentiated workers are employed. It is the number and quality of the workers used, relative to management, that principally differentiates plantation agriculture from other forms of agricultural cultivation. As Jones has put it, "the plantation substitutes supervision — supervisory and administrative skills — for skilled, adaptive labor, combining the supervision with labor whose principal skill is to follow orders." What distinguishes plantation production from other kinds of farming "is the bringing together of as many unskilled laborers as is economically profitable with each of the few highly skilled supervisor-managers who direct production."<sup>4</sup>

A plantation economy is one in which this form of cultivation is dominant. For estate farming to flourish, in fact, society must possess institutions supportive of plantation agriculture. Specifically, this means that mechanisms must be present which insure that the producing units gain access to the large numbers of inexpensive workers essential to plantation profitability. A wide variety of such institutions are functional in that regard. But they all must serve either to deny to the workers themselves the training and education which would equip them to fill alternative employment opportunities or else act to bar access to such alternatives as might emerge. Principally, the latter means

denying plantation workers access to land. Nothing would have undermined plantation agriculture more than permitting an independent land-holding peasantry to emerge. Given the opportunity, it is clear that workers would have chosen to cultivate their own land rather than work on plantations, even at the cost of considerable foregone income.<sup>5</sup>

The effort to construct a model of plantation-dominated societies, because it involves "non-economic" as well as "economic" factors, represents a project which, in many respects, is comparable to the agenda which Marx and Marxist theorists set for themselves. Plantation theory attempts to capture the salient aspects of Caribbean society in historical perspective and on that basis identify the trajectory and pace of change in the region. Much the same can be said of Marxists when mode of production analysis is used in historical studies. Indeed, St. Cyr, in reviewing the work of one of the pioneers of plantation theory, explicitly notes that "it would seem that, not unlike Marx, Lloyd Best is out to explain the process of historical development of West Indian society and economy."<sup>6</sup>

As seen from the Marxist perspective itself, plantation theory raises two important questions. First is the issue of whether plantation slavery represented a discrete mode of production different from the modes of production enumerated by Marx. In general, theorists who emphasize the world economy tend to reject the position that slavery in the New World represented a non-capitalist mode of production. They argue that the fact that the region produced for world markets meant that it was capitalist, though taking its place in the periphery of that world system. Others such as Ken Post, who emphasize the internal organization of society in characterizing it, argue that the existence of plantation slavery meant that capitalism was not present. For such authorities, under slavery the class relations characteristic of capitalism were absent. Plantation slavery, writes Post, "was a distinct mode of *production* even if incorporated into capitalist exchange."<sup>7</sup>

The second issue arises only if it is agreed that plantation slavery represented a non-capitalist mode of production. It concerns the question of whether that mode of production came to an end with emancipation. On this question, Post's answer is in the affirmative. He writes that in Jamaica "capitalism as it grew after 1838 was born out of the abrupt termination of chattel slav-



ery . . . ." He argues that with emancipation, two rival systems of production — peasant production and a capitalist mode of production — competed with each other. Both of these "greatly hampered each other's growth, but the latter in time prevailed."<sup>8</sup>

Plantation economic theory, however, is explicitly in disagreement with that perspective and denies that emancipation marked a sharp discontinuity in the development of the region's societies. George Beckford, in *Persistent Poverty*, writes that the characteristics of the slave plantation system were "preserved and strengthened in the period since Emancipation," and Best and Levitt agree that "Caribbean economy has undergone little structural change in the four hundred-odd years of its existence."<sup>9</sup>

The argument that slavery was a non-capitalist mode of production but that after emancipation, capitalism was present in the region is based on Marx's identification of the wage mechanism as "salient in the functioning of capitalism." Under slavery a person did not have the right to choose whether to enter a labor market and did not receive a wage for his or her labor power. It was not until slavery was abolished that these developments occurred. Thus it is that Post writes that emancipation was "a 'revolution' in that it took thousands of slaves and turned them virtually overnight into potential free labourers, 'free' that is, in the sense that their previous relationship with the means of production had been dissolved."<sup>10</sup> Seen in this way, juridical freedom meant the inception of capitalist relations. In response to those who argue that emancipation did not mark the ending of the plantation economy, Post argues that such a view "underplays the important structural changes consequent on the emergence after emancipation of a peasantry and a wage labor market."<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Walter Rodney argues that the application of the plantation model to post-emancipation Guyana is "open to criticism on the score of exaggerating the stagnation" which existed in that society.<sup>12</sup>

But it is precisely on the question of the reality of the freedom experienced by the ex-slaves that plantation theory makes its case for continuity in the mode of production. Clearly, in the construction of a behavioral model, the issue of juridical freedom is not decisive. What really matters is whether, after emancipation, labor's options with regard to the locus and type of work engaged in, and the level of compensation to be received, had sub-

stantially changed. If emancipation did mean a widening of opportunities, then it marked a change in social organization. But if emancipation resulted only in the creation of "a new system of slavery"<sup>13</sup> in which, no matter the juridical position, *de facto* workers continued to be forced to provide their labor power to estates, then the case for continuity in the mode of production can be defended. This is not to deny that emancipation opened up the potentiality for change. But emancipation itself did not produce that change. Whether a new mode of production was established depended on the extent to which, in the post-emancipation setting, the range of opportunities for labor was substantially widened.

For the theorists of the plantation economy, not enough changed with regard to labor's options to make the case for a new mode of production. Throughout the region, with emancipation, Best and Levitt find that "labor is imported and land is engrossed so that labor force has little option but to sell its wage services" to the estates.<sup>14</sup> This pattern, reinforced by the racist culture associated with British colonialism, precluded occupational mobility and effectively confined labor to plantation work. In Beckford's words, "everywhere the thrust was the same: the plantation owners made it difficult for the ex-slaves to secure land of their own and introduced measures to force them to continue working on the plantation."<sup>15</sup>

The possibility that a peasantry independent of the plantation sector might develop was the most profound threat confronting the latter. If sufficient land had come under small farmer control, the very viability of the plantation sector could have been challenged. In that case, emancipation in fact would have resulted in a new mode of production. But it was precisely to prevent such a development that the governments in the region made little effort to support the small farm sector. Woodville Marshall writes that planters "convinced official opinion in England that both the prosperity and civilization of the West Indies were dependent on the survival of the estate-based industry." It was because of this neglect that "the potential of peasant development was never fully realized . . ." The peasant and plantation sectors were in direct competition with each other for resources. But in that competition, everything favored the estates, with the exception of the preferences of the farmers themselves, for whom "there is overwhelming evidence of desire

to acquire . . . estate land not in cultivation and Crown Land."<sup>16</sup> The result was that a peasantry did emerge, but one which was constrained numerically and also with regard to the quality of the land which was available to it.

In some cases, during periods in which the market for the staple was depressed, the estates themselves made land available to plantation workers. This represented a means to maintain their presence and thus ensure their availability when needed. During such periods, workers were "moved out of residence onto plots from which they cannot derive a livelihood without engaging in supplementary plantation work."<sup>17</sup> The upshot was that though a peasantry did emerge, it never was large enough or independent enough to represent a substantial threat to the availability of labor to the plantation sector. As Beckford concluded, "peasant development in the West Indies is constrained by the institutional legacy of the plantation system."<sup>18</sup>

### *The Agriculture of Grenada*

But if a peasantry anywhere in the Caribbean had been successful in establishing itself as an alternative to the plantation sector, it would have been in the Windward Islands and specifically in Grenada. According to Marshall, "because of late settlement, a sparse population and mountainous terrain, these islands have never possessed a plantation system which exercised full dominance over the economy and landscape." As a result, he writes, a peasantry was "able to sustain a competition with the plantation for land and labour in conditions more favourable to it than in any other territory." In this regard, Marshall cites data indicating that in 1950, 22.9 percent of the land occupied by farms in Grenada were in holdings of five acres or less, a percentage roughly double the level of that in Jamaica or Trinidad.<sup>19</sup>

However, serious questions can be raised with regard to the independence of even the Grenadian peasantry. As reported by the anthropologist M. G. Smith, a strong relationship of dependency and paternalism persisted at least until the 1930s, precisely the kind of relationship functional to plantation agriculture. With emancipation and the deterioration of the international sugar market, planters moved to replace cane with cocoa. They did so by letting out plots of land to ex-slaves who

planted and tended cocoa trees. When these trees began to bear fruit, the owner resumed control of the land, giving the former slaves access to new land on similar terms. In the meantime, the small cultivator grew bananas in the shade provided by the cocoa trees and planted subsistence crops as well. Smith lists other rights provided to these estate residents, including rent-free residences, the use of small gardens, grazing rights, rights to timber, dead wood, and fallen coconuts, and a first claim on employment on the estates compared to non-estate residents. Smith states that though wages were low, "these customary rights met most of the workers' subsistence needs" and that "both planters and workers found this symbiotic relation convenient and it was maintained for generations on each estate."<sup>20</sup>

The relationship described by Smith is one of dependency and paternalism between planters and "peasants." To the extent that the pattern which he describes was representative, its presence is suggestive of the continuation of the plantation economy and the fact that capitalist class relations had not as yet fully emerged in the Grenada of the 1930s. For, as Eugene D. Genovese has written, "all paternalism rests on a master-servant relationship . . . it is incompatible with bourgeois social relations."<sup>21</sup>

Smith specifically argues that there was an "economic symbiosis" between planters and peasants, in that communities were formed "in which both were bound together by customary relations." He captures the essence of the relationship when he notes that "these relations between planters and 'peasants' were asymmetrical but solidary" and that "so long as these customary modes persisted, planters and 'peasants' lived at peace."<sup>22</sup>

Even as late as 1939, it appears that 70 percent of Grenadian peasants were participants in this kind of relationship of dependency with planters.<sup>23</sup> It is on this basis that Patrick Emmanuel concluded that even for Grenada, "the rise of a numerous peasantry by no means meant the demise of the plantocracy."<sup>24</sup> As A. W. Singham has put it, "despite the important contribution to the economy made by small farmers, the plantation system has remained the dominant influence in determining both the value system and the class structure in Grenada as well as the mode of production."<sup>25</sup> Even in Grenada, where small cultivators had become much more numerous than elsewhere in the region, the plantation economy persisted until very late in the day.

### *The End of Paternalism*

It was not until the Depression of the 1930s that the planters moved to modernize their production methods. A 1938 Commission of Enquiry encouraged that process when it condemned the view that "the management of an estate is not an occupation requiring special training and knowledge." It went on to warn that "faced with increasing competition and low prices for primary products, the agricultural community is faced with disaster unless estates are managed on modern and scientific lines . . . not only must every acre be made to produce its maximum, but the land and its appurtenances must be properly conserved and every superfluous overhead charge cut out."<sup>26</sup>

It was under these pressures to rationalize production methods during the 1930s that Smith reports that the relationship of dependency between planters and peasants began to break down as the planters began to withdraw customary rights. With this, "the traditional paternalistic relation between planter and 'peasant' gave way to uncertainty, mutual distrust and eventually to bitterness."<sup>27</sup> The effect of this transformation was postponed during World War II. But the symbol of the change which had occurred in Grenada was the general strike in February and March 1951 led by Eric M. Gairy, then head of the Grenada Manual and Mental Workers Union. As a visiting American scholar wrote at the time, "violence is done to planter class values if workers lay claim to equality in the bargaining process . . ."<sup>28</sup>

According to Brizan, the participants in the strike "were the proto-peasantry and the road workers; but they were ably supported by small peasants." This strike, then, was both the consequence of the prior breakdown of the plantation economy and the signal that a new era had emerged in which the long-standing acceptance of paternalism was rejected by Grenada's labor force. As Brizan puts it, the union emerged from the strike victorious and from there, "its President General, Mr. E. M. Gairy, became the arbiter of the political fortunes of Grenada, at least for the next thirty years."<sup>29</sup> The plantation economy in Grenada was no longer dominant.

The legacy of the plantation economy in Grenada, as elsewhere, was poverty. The very social institutions which ensured the viability of that form of agriculture also were responsible for the fact that countries in which it prevailed did not experience

modern economic development. Low labor costs encouraged planters to persist in labor-intensive methods of production. In addition, the way that labor was used on the estates meant that educational opportunities were narrowly constrained. In short, the efficient functioning of the plantation economy meant that planters did not have a strong incentive, nor did the educationally deprived have the capacity to engage in the process of technological innovation, which is the hallmark of economic development. The result was that the Grenada of the 1950s was a society dominated by a technologically rudimentary agricultural sector in which the per capita income was only about \$129 (U.S.).<sup>30</sup>

But the legacy of the plantation economy in Grenada is not simply captured by pointing to the country's poverty and underdevelopment. For with the ending of the plantation economy, an entire way of life had come to an end. Straitened economic circumstances associated with the Depression had induced the planters to withdraw the privileges that had customarily been accorded to plantation workers. It is also possible that in Grenada, as in other similar places, the facade of paternalism had worn thin and the population was looking for a new basis upon which to achieve greater equality. In any case, in the new era the planters "had redefined themselves as employers rather than patrons." At the same time, the planters' "'people' tended more and more to occupy the status of laborers."<sup>31</sup> In Grenada the impersonal market relations of capitalism had come to dominate the economy.

### *Gairyism*

The construction of a new social order is not easily achieved. Obviously, the adoption of strict market relations with regard to the labor force was not attractive to large numbers of Grenadians. Their lack of training and education meant that if they were forced to compete, unprotected, in a labor market, they would be in a weak bargaining position and vulnerable to both low wages and unemployment. Thus it is not surprising that they resisted the new arrangements and, in the absence of any alternative, sought the restoration of the past. Smith reports that Grenada's workers sought to recreate the "traditional relations between planter and people." In the old regime, the people

and the planters engaged in a symbiotic adjustment of needs and resources in which market calculations were only part of, and did not necessarily dominate, decision-making. Obviously, Smith continues,

this does not mean that peasants and planters had much in common besides their symbiosis; but the workers were familiar with this relation. They looked back to the days when it had assured them their subsistence; and they longed to restore this traditional pattern in good working order . . .<sup>32</sup>

The problem was that Eric Gairy was a spokesman neither for the full implementation of the new capitalist relations nor for the restoration of plantation paternalism. As a populist figure, he championed the cause of the proto-peasantry and the small farmers. But his advocacy could neither recreate the past nor effectively constrain the development of a market-dominated society. He could not, even if he had wanted to, reverse the tide of history and induce the planters to restore paternalism. Indeed, the fact that Gairy himself was the head of a union symbolized the impossibility of reestablishing the plantation economy. At the same time, he could not fully defend market relations even though such acceptance was implied by the formation of the Grenada Manual and Mental Workers Union. It was, after all, his own constituency which was balking at the process by which the market was becoming the dominant social institution in Grenada. The dilemma was at least partly resolved by his adoption of a paternalistic leadership style in which "Uncle Gairy" was both a spokesman for Grenada's workers and farmers and also its benefactor. Favors were distributed through the union to retain loyalty. Gairy's "charm and sartorial elegance" as well as his mysticism seemed to have resonated with the population and reinforced his authority.<sup>33</sup> Thus it is that Gordon K. Lewis writes of Gairyism as both traditional and non-traditional, with "its street violence, its demagoguery, its curious mixture in its ideological content of God, Marx, and the British Empire."<sup>34</sup>

Despite Gairy's ambivalence, capitalist class relations in Grenada did develop. By the end of his reign in 1979, the plantation economy had been thoroughly dismantled. Agricultural methods were rationalized and levels of labor productivity increased.<sup>35</sup> Tourism, and with it services and construction, at least for a time prospered as Grenada took advantage of its natural factor endowments to encourage a luxury tourist trade. But

Grenada under Gairy experienced nothing like the modernization which occurred at the same time in a country such as neighboring Barbados. For by the mid-1960s, Gairy's hostility towards the old elite had been resolved in favor of a single-minded effort at self-aggrandizement. Especially from the mid-1960s on, his economic policies can much better be understood as a means to advance his own interests and those of his friends and colleagues than as a means of introducing a modern system of capitalism to the island. Thus he introduced a land reform program, "Land for the Landless." Its intention, however, was not to rationalize Grenada's agriculture and improve its productivity but rather to victimize landowners who opposed his party. Similarly, Gairy oversaw a system of privileges, tax breaks, and other incentives not as a means to advance investment and productivity in the economy but as a reward system. Most commentators would agree that in these efforts, Gairy was attempting not only to augment his own wealth but also to create "a new class of capitalists dependent on his patronage machine."<sup>36</sup>

In this Gairy might well have been successful, but only at a terrible cost to the country. For the result of his efforts was that during his long period of rule, institutions promotive of modernization and economic growth were not put in place as the anachronistic plantation economy was dismantled. As a consequence, the Grenadian economy did very poorly. It suffered especially after independence was achieved in 1974, with growth rates consistently negative between that year and 1979, and the unemployment rate rising to nearly incalculable rates.<sup>37</sup>

### *The Rise of the New Jewel Movement*

The process of social change unleashed by the breakdown of the plantation economy was erratic and contradictory. The society had rejected plantation paternalism, but the trade union movement, which had been instrumental in that overthrow, was the personal fiefdom of a single individual — Eric Gairy. Capitalist class relations were under construction, but at that very same time, an effort was underway to replace the elite with a new class of entrepreneurs loyal to the Prime Minister. Even as Grenada's mass politics became articulated and an embryonic nationalism initiated, the electorate expressed its preference in 1962 for a unitary state with Trinidad, a union which in fact never was

achieved. But perhaps the most important consequence of the breakdown of the plantation was that the educational attainment of the Grenadian population increased enormously in this period. Between 1946 and 1970, the number of persons receiving a secondary education increased by more than five-fold, and there was almost a doubling of the number of Grenadians with a university education between 1960 and 1970 alone.<sup>38</sup>

It was this rise of an intelligensia in Grenada which ultimately gave rise to the Grenada Revolution. It was the return to Grenada in 1969 and 1970 from studies abroad of men like Maurice Bishop, Unison Whiteman, and later Bernard Coard, which set the pattern of politics in Grenada in the 1970s. Greatly influenced by the extra-parliamentary politics of the Black Power movement in the region, these radical intellectuals and professionals achieved the singular accomplishment of shifting the locus of Grenadian politics from the parliament to the streets and villages of the country. In this, they were unwittingly assisted by Eric Gairy, who was prime minister for most of this period. For Gairy not only had found his own political roots in the same process, but the oppressive and violent form which his rule took tended to delegitimize the Westminster Model. His use of extra-legal methods of force and coercion — the Mongoose Gang — was not only a vehicle to intimidate his opponents. It was also part of the process by which politically active people in Grenada came to view with suspicion the legitimacy of the country's electoral process and shift their attention to extra-parliamentary activity.

Grenada's politics had been born in the streets in 1950 and 1951 under Gairy's leadership. It returned to the street in opposition to him in December 1970, when some thirty nurses marched in a picket line protesting deplorable conditions at St. George's Hospital. Arrested, they saw their cause championed by the recently-returned Maurice Bishop, Kenrick Radix, and others. Throughout the rest of the decade, direct action became the focus of opposition activity. Politics in Grenada ran on two tracks: the electoral track in which Gairy was consistently successful, and the non-electoral one in which Left intellectuals increasingly were effective. The fact that Grenadian politics became defined in this way was greatly to the advantage of Gairy's opponents. They were not confined to the electoral cycle in articulating their politics, were not immobilized when the rul-

ing authorities manipulated the electoral mechanism to the advantage of the incumbent and in fact became increasingly sophisticated in developing their own methods of political mobilization. From these activities, the Left opposition emerged with its own legitimacy, an authenticity which served them well when they moved directly to assume power in the country.

After the nurses' demonstration, the next incident which gave the Left an opportunity to influence events occurred in late 1972 at La Sagesse estate. The English owner of the plantation, Lord Brownlow, withdrew the customary rights of the public to go through his estate to gain access to a popular beach. Initially the people in the area protested to the government, but when they were rebuffed, they turned to the JEWEL — Joint Endeavor for Welfare, Education, and Liberation — for support. The JEWEL had recently been established by the educator Unison Whiteman and others with the intention of mobilizing the rural population, precisely the segment of society involved in this incident. The JEWEL organized numerous demonstrations culminating in the convening of a "People's Court." This informal tribunal ruled that the gate which had been erected to prevent access to the sea should be dismantled and that Lord Brownlow himself should be expelled from Grenada. In the aftermath of the tribunal, members of the JEWEL in fact did tear down the gate and Lord Brownlow emigrated from the country.<sup>39</sup> The lesson of the efficacy of direct action was not lost on the participants. As DaBreo put it: "from then on both Bishop and Whiteman continued their political agitation and the Movement grew from strength to greater strength drawing the bulk of its support from the youth, the unemployed and the masses of the working class."<sup>40</sup>

The New Jewel Movement (NJM) was formed several months after the La Sagesse affair when the JEWEL merged with the Movement for Assemblies of the People (MAP), an organization to which Bishop and Radix were attached. The unity which this merger created on the Left served to compound the paradox which Eric Gairy faced: "although there was virtually no official opposition in the country, the Government was very busily engaged with dealing with the very real and unorthodox opposition to it . . ."<sup>41</sup> Throughout the country this unofficial opposition kept up a drum-beat of demands ranging from better health facilities to the resignation of the Government, all the while

enhancing its prestige and claim to social and political leadership.

By November 1973, the NJM felt itself powerful enough to call a "People's Congress." This "Congress" attracted an estimated 10,000 people and drew up "The People's Indictment," which demanded that the government resign within two weeks. It also insisted that the NJM's own 1973 Manifesto, and particularly its plan for a system of village assemblies, form the basis for a new political system in the country. The government responded with "Bloody Sunday," in which the leaders of the Movement were beaten by the Mongoose Gang and jailed. As one observer put it, Bloody Sunday "marked a turning point in the opposition to Gairy because it drew together large portions of Grenadian society — including the middle and upper class — in a reaction of fear and disgust at Gairy's brutality."<sup>42</sup>

This popular response compelled Gairy to agree to appoint a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the Bloody Sunday incident. The Duffus Commission further undermined the legitimacy of the government when it issued a devastating indictment of the government's action.<sup>43</sup> But in itself and in the short run, the report did not check the government. On January 21, 1974, "Bloody Monday" occurred when the police shot and killed Maurice Bishop's father, Rupert, as he attempted to block police access to a building containing women and children fleeing from street conflict between demonstrators and the police. The high tide of opposition extended through February 1974, when Grenada achieved independence at the same time that an island-wide economic shutdown was underway. But with independence, the flood of opposition subsided. By 1976, in an election in which the NJM for the first time participated as part of an electoral alliance, Gairy had recovered sufficiently to retain power, with the NJM leading the opposition.

### *The Military Takeover*

Evidence is scanty, but it seems clear that it was in the aftermath of its participation in the elections that the NJM underwent major organizational changes. Sources very close to the party, W. Richard and Ian Jacobs and Trevor Munroe, agree that it was after 1976 that the party reorganized itself on a Leninist basis. Jacobs and Jacobs write that the party developed "a more

sophisticated political organization based on the strictest principles of democratic centralism. It also led to the development of a clandestine wing of the NJM, trained in insurrectionary activity . . ."<sup>44</sup> According to Munroe, the reorganization of the party involved making membership more selective, creating secret support groups in villages and districts, and emphasizing political education. These changes, according to Munroe, were based on the lessons which the party had learned from its experiences to date and especially from its inability to use the upsurges of 1973 and 1974 to remove Gairy from office. Munroe says that he himself had discussed with members of the NJM that it was insufficiently disciplined, had not done enough work in trade union activity, and had not satisfactorily built up organized grass roots support. According to Munroe, the reforms carried out in the party structure solved its problems. As a result, he writes,

when the time came for the people to respond, they came out, since they had been organized in support groups, they knew that the party defended them and when the Comrade said the Revolution is for you, they know from their experience that it was something for them.<sup>45</sup>

The NJM asserts that it moved militarily in March 1979 only after it had discovered that Gairy had ordered the assassination of eight leading members of the party. According to Jacobs and Jacobs, news of the assassination plot was relayed to the NJM leaders on the afternoon of March 12, 1979. The leadership convened and decided to attack militarily the next morning. Munroe reports that at this meeting, only five votes were recorded, that the vote in favor of military action was 3-2, and that Maurice Bishop himself was in the minority. According to another source, the party summoned seventy members of its "defence wing"; of the fifty who showed up, forty-six were sent into battle.<sup>46</sup> The attack by the revolutionaries occurred on the barracks at 4:00 a.m. and was completely successful. By 5:00 a.m., Grenada's radio station, which was not far from the initial operation, had been captured; at 6:00 a.m., the first news of the Revolution was broadcast to the nation. In all, a total of three fatalities had occurred.

The new Prime Minister, Maurice Bishop, addressed the nation at 10:30 a.m. He declared that Gairy's army had been "completely defeated and surrendered." He called "upon the



working people, the youths, workers, farmers, fishermen, middle-class people and women to join our armed revolutionary forces at central positions in your communities and to give them any assistance which they call for." The evidence indicates that the Grenadian people did respond as the prime minister had requested. As Hugh O'Shaughnessy says, "the coup was enormously popular with Grenadians and it seemed as if the whole of the island was coming out into the streets to celebrate."<sup>47</sup>

### Assessment

The Grenada Revolution was underway. It was a revolution in a country where only very recently had the population broken the hegemony of the plantation economy and started to construct its own political culture. The original agent of that creative process, Eric Gairy, however, turned against it once he himself was in power. His last years in office had especially been an ugly combination of mysticism and official violence in an effort to enforce a cultural counter-revolution. But only partially had he succeeded, as the radical middle class organized a popular mobilization throughout the country. Though this extra-parliamentary politics scored many victories during the 1970s, it nonetheless failed its overriding goal of replacing Gairy. That awaited the military events of March 13, 1979.

In his address to the nation on the first day of the Revolution, Maurice Bishop told his listeners "this revolution is for work, for food, for decent housing and health services and for a bright future for our children and great grand children." He also assured "the people of Grenada that all democratic freedoms, including freedom of elections, religious and political opinion, will be fully restored to the people."<sup>48</sup> In short, Bishop promised Grenada both economic development and democracy.

But much was to conspire against the Grenada Revolution's achieving these goals. The country was poor and very few of the institutional mechanisms necessary for economic development to be achieved were yet in place. Its politics too had not yet found an institutionalized way to tap the activism which the extra-parliamentary Left had generated. This weakness was reinforced by the manner in which the Revolution itself had been accomplished, with a single military stroke by a handful of individuals. The general population was involved only after the fact

and even then as supporters rather than initiators. The Revolution, in sum, had come to a society in which the economics of modernization and the politics of participation were still in a fledgling state. The Left with its anti-Gairy activism had nurtured their development. The Revolution represented the hope that they could be brought to maturity.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of these efforts in Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, as well as Cuba, see my *Patterns of Caribbean Development: An Interpretive Essay on Economic Change* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1982).

<sup>2</sup>Eric St. Cyr, "The Theory of Caribbean Economy: Its Origins and Current Status," *Occasional Paper 4*, Institute of International Relations (St. Augustine, Trinidad: The University of the West Indies, 1983), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Previous work which I have done in this regard includes *Patterns of Caribbean Development*, especially Chapter 4; *The Roots of Black Poverty: The Southern Plantation Economy After the Civil War* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1978); and *The Plantation Economy: Population and Economic Change in Guyana, 1838-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1973).

<sup>4</sup>W. O. Jones, "Plantations," in David L. Sills, ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 12 (1968), p. 154; also George L. Beckford, *Persistent Poverty: Underdevelopment in Plantation Economics of the Third World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>Fogel and Engerman estimate for the United States South that even a 50 percent increase in income free white workers were earning on their own land would not have been sufficient to induce them to shift to plantation work. See Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), Vol. 1, p. 237.

<sup>6</sup>Eric St. Cyr, "The Theory of Caribbean Economy," p. 12.

<sup>7</sup>Ken Post, *Arise Ye Starvelings: The Jamaican Labour Rebellion of 1938 and its Aftermath* (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), p. 22. (Emphasis in the original.)

<sup>8</sup>Post, p. 23.

<sup>9</sup>George L. Beckford, *Persistent Poverty*, p. 48. Kari Levitt and Lloyd Best, "Character of Caribbean Economy," in George L. Beckford, ed., *Caribbean Economy* (Kingston, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, 1975), p. 37.

<sup>10</sup>Post, p. 24-25.

<sup>11</sup>Post, p. 46, n. 22.

<sup>12</sup>Walter Rodney, *A History of the Guyanese Working People, 1881-1905* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), p. 263, n. 2.

<sup>13</sup>Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas, 1830-1920* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

<sup>14</sup>Levitt and Best, p. 42.

- <sup>15</sup>Beckford, p. 92.
- <sup>16</sup>Woodville K. Marshall, "Notes on Peasant Development in the West Indies Since 1838," in *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (September 1968), pp. 261, 255.
- <sup>17</sup>Levitt and Best, p. 45; Jay R. Mandle, *The Plantation Economy*, pp. 32-43.
- <sup>18</sup>Beckford, p. 28.
- <sup>19</sup>Marshall, pp. 259, 260.
- <sup>20</sup>M. G. Smith, *Stratification in Grenada* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965), p. 11.
- <sup>21</sup>Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), p. 661.
- <sup>22</sup>Smith, p. 12. Smith insists, in the Grenada context, on using the word peasant only in quotation marks.
- <sup>23</sup>Brizan reports 12,937 proto-peasants, workers "who both sold their labour to the estates and owned or rented land." Of these laborers, Brizan writes: "It was not unusual for some of them to work 2-3 days per week on the estates. They grew food crops either for subsistence or the local market or a combination of both. It was difficult to draw a clear line between peasant farmer and estate worker; for estate work was looked upon by the small owners as a means of procuring ready cash to meet their domestic demands and to supplement the parsimonious income from their freeholds. Altogether it was reported in 1939 that there were 18,259 farms of 10 acres or less in Grenada." See George I. Brizan, *The Grenadian Peasantry and Social Revolution 1930-1951*, Working Paper No. 2 (Kingston, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1979), pp. 13, 7.
- <sup>24</sup>Patrick Emmanuel, *Crown Colony Politics in Grenada 1917-1951*, Occasional Paper Series No. 7 (Cave Hill, Barbados: Institute of Social and Economic Research [Eastern Caribbean], University of the West Indies, 1978), p. 15.
- <sup>25</sup>A. W. Singham, *The Hero and the Crowd in a Colonial Polity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 53.
- <sup>26</sup>*Commission of Enquiry of Economic Conditions of Wage Earners in the Colony of Grenada with Special Reference to the Agricultural Industry and to Obtain Recommendations for Their Amelioration* (Trinidad and Tobago: A. L. Rhodes, 1938), p. 10.
- <sup>27</sup>Smith, p. 13.
- <sup>28</sup>Simon Rottenberg, "Labor Relations in an Underdeveloped Country," *Caribbean Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1955), p. 54.
- <sup>29</sup>Brizan, pp. 31, 33.
- <sup>30</sup>M. G. Smith reports a gross domestic product in Grenada of \$8.75 million (U.S.) in 1952 and that the 1946 census estimated a population of 72,400. See his *Stratification in Grenada*, p. 9, and also *The Plural Society in the British West Indies* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1965), p. 271.
- <sup>31</sup>Smith, *The Plural Society*, pp. 299, 301.
- <sup>32</sup>Smith, pp. 298, 299.
- <sup>33</sup>Anthony Payne, Paul Sutton and Tony Thorndike, *Grenada: Revolution and Invasion* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), p. 6.
- <sup>34</sup>Gordon K. Lewia, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968), p. 158.
- <sup>35</sup>W. Richard Jacobs and Ian Jacobs, *Grenada: The Route to Revolution* (Ciudad de la Habana, Cuba: Casa de las Americas, 1980), pp. 91-92.
- <sup>36</sup>EPICA Task Force, *Grenada: The Peaceful Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: The EPICA Task Force, 1982), pp. 44, 42.
- <sup>37</sup>Fitzroy Ambursley, "Grenada: the New Jewel Revolution," in Fitzroy Ambursley and Robin Cohen, eds., *Crisis in the Caribbean* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), p. 193. When the People's Revolutionary Government came to power, it claimed that the unemployment rate was 50 percent. Ambursley, p. 208.
- <sup>38</sup>Jacobs and Jacobs, p. 84.
- <sup>39</sup>Jacobs and Jacobs, p. 77; also EPICA Task Force, p. 45.
- <sup>40</sup>D. Sinclair DaBreo, *The Grenada Revolution* (Castries, St. Lucia: A.M.A.P.S. Publication, 1979), p. 58.
- <sup>41</sup>DaBreo, p. 58.
- <sup>42</sup>EPICA Task Force, p. 46.
- <sup>43</sup>Excerpts of this report are reproduced in DaBreo, pp. 81-96.
- <sup>44</sup>Jacobs and Jacobs, p. 117.
- <sup>45</sup>Trevor Munroe, *Grenada: Revolution, Counter-Revolution* (Kingston, Jamaica: Vanguard Publishers, 1983), pp. 54-56, 52-53, 57.
- <sup>46</sup>Munroe, p. 133; Hugh O'Shaughnessy, *Grenada: Revolution, Invasion, and Aftermath* (London: Sphere Books Limited, 1984), p. 78.
- <sup>47</sup>Prime Minister Maurice Bishop's first address to the nation is reproduced in DaBreo, pp. 348-350; O'Shaughnessy, p. 79.
- <sup>48</sup>DeBreo, pp. 350, 349.



## Chapter 2

## THE ECONOMY

*Economic Performance*

At the time of the Revolution, Grenada was, even by Caribbean standards, a poor nation. Its agriculture was technically backward and dominated by the traditional export crops of nutmeg, bananas, and cocoa. Only a luxury tourist industry had emerged to complement agriculture, with manufacturing's contribution to output negligible. Thus, one standard by which the PRG would be judged was its success in diversifying and improving the technical competence of the Grenadian economy. If under the NJM's leadership, new sectors of economic activity emerged and output increased, then the Revolutionary leaders would be the recipients of praise and goodwill.

In fact, between 1979 and 1982, Grenada's real gross domestic product did increase by 10 percent. (See Table I.) However, virtually all of that growth had its source in the country's construction sector and within that sector, the building of the

new international airport dominated. The value of construction activity over these years more than tripled. Other sectors, however, contributed negligibly to growth, with manufacturing responsible for \$5.4 million (E.C.) in 1978 and only \$5.7 million (E.C.) in 1982. The value of agricultural output in these years actually declined. These were particularly bleak years for the country as a result of hurricane and flood damage in both August 1979 and January 1980. Between 1979 and 1982, the revenue earned by nutmeg and mace declined by 6.7 percent; bananas, 15.6 percent; and cocoa, an enormous 55 percent. In the case of nutmeg and mace, prices remained firm but export sales declined. With regard to bananas, an increase in price was insufficient to compensate for declining exports. As for cocoa, there was the worst of both worlds: both prices and sales fell. As a result of these trends, agriculture's contribution to Grenada's gross domestic product declined 10.5 percent during these years, from \$59.1 million (E.C.) to \$52.9 million (E.C.).<sup>1</sup> (See Table I.)

The problem with the growth experienced during the years of the PRG, therefore, was that it was almost entirely externally generated. In 1981, funding for the airport came to \$38.7 million (E.C.), all but \$0.8 million of which came from foreign sources. Included in this aid was \$23 million (E.C.) received in grants from Cuba and \$10.8 million (E.C.) in loans from Libya.<sup>2</sup> It may be true, as Fitzroy Ambursley writes, that even though the local contribution to the project was quite small, the funds which were raised "were an expression of support that exists among the Grenadian masses for the project."<sup>3</sup> But the fact remains that it was a project whose feasibility was entirely dependent on foreign assistance. In the absence of economic dynamism elsewhere in the Grenadian economy, during these years the country's growth too was entirely dependent on the assistance which was received from abroad. Grenada itself had not yet discovered an indigenous source of development.

*Tourism and the Airport*

Not only was the building of the airport a source of growth in the short-run, but the international airport was also the centerpiece of the PRG's economic strategy. In the 1983 budget, Bernard Coard wrote that its opening would represent "the beginning of a whole new economic era for our country."<sup>4</sup> Two

TABLE I  
*Gross Domestic Product of Grenada at Factor Cost  
by Sectoral Origin, 1978-1983 (\$ EC [1980] million)*

Item	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
Primary Sector:					
Agriculture, etc.	53.7	59.1	53.6	56.7	52.9
Industrial Sector:	13.0	12.5	17.4	21.1	24.0
Manufacturing	5.4	5.1	5.0	5.7	5.7
Construction	4.3	4.2	8.7	11.8	14.7
Utilities	3.3	3.2	3.7	3.7	3.6
Services:	118.8	117.8	124.1	123.9	131.0
Total GDP	185.5	189.4	195.1	201.7	208.1

Source: Government of Grenada (with the assistance of the Caribbean Development Bank), *Economic Memorandum on Grenada*, Vol. 1 (February 1984), p. 12

TABLE II  
Exports of Major Agricultural Commodities from Grenada, 1975-1982

Commodity	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
<b>Bananas:</b>								
Volume ('000 lbs.)	29,700	33,800	30,900	31,500	31,220	27,470	22,410	21,620
Value (\$ EC 000)	6,600	7,900	8,586	9,288	10,449	11,097	9,646	8,814
Price per lb. (¢)	0.22	0.23	0.28	0.29	0.33	0.40	0.44	0.42
<b>Cocoa:</b>								
Volume ('000 lbs.)	5,100	5,900	4,600	5,300	5,260	4,110	5,900	4,680
Value (\$ EC 000)	7,100	8,883	8,883	19,575	27,027	16,200	15,340	12,168
Price per lb. (¢)	1.39	1.50	1.93	3.69	5.14	3.94	3.12	2.57
<b>Nutmeg and Mace:</b>								
Volume ('000 lbs.)	3,800	7,000	7,100	5,000	5,810	3,910	4,710	5,220
Value (\$ EC 000)	9,900	15,984	17,577	12,293	14,553	10,361	9,984	13,572
Price per lb. (¢)	2.60	2.28	2.48	2.48	2.50	2.65	2.82	2.50

Source: Government of Grenada (with the assistance of the Caribbean Development Bank), *Economic Memorandum on Grenada*, Vol. 1 (February 1984), p. 12.

years earlier, Maurice Bishop had told the Grenadian people that "we must all be clear that this project represents the biggest and single most important project for our future economic development." Bishop argued that "we as a people have agreed that the expansion of our tourism industry is vital to the development of our country" and that "it is the international airport which will bring all this tourism development . . ." The airport, in short, was critical because of its stimulative effect on tourism. It was believed by the Prime Minister that "the development of our tourism industry will bring with it previously unconceived development to our country and benefits to all our people."<sup>5</sup> It is not excessive to say, as did Ambursley, that the PRG saw "tourism as a locomotive of economic growth."<sup>6</sup>

The government was unreserved in its enthusiasm for tourism and its growth-promoting potential. Coard cited the construction of the airport as an example of "how our country can become rich and developed and how that shining runway leads straight into real change and prosperity for all of us here."<sup>7</sup> Prime Minister Bishop, in June 1983, called the airport

the gateway to our future. As we see it, it is what alone can give us the potential for economic takeoff. As we see it, it can help us to develop the tourist industry more. It can help us to develop our agro-industries more. It can help us to export our fresh fruits and vegetables better.<sup>8</sup>

The airport was thus linked to tourism and the latter to agriculture as a mechanism for growth. The EPICA Task Force thus summarized the case:

. . . tourist arrivals are expected to rise from 32,000 (in 1979) to 50,000 . . . and revenues from tourism should triple. The benefits of increased tourism will rebound through the entire economy: by necessitating hotel construction . . . by creating jobs in the tourist sector and by generating foreign exchange quickly while the country gradually diversifies its agricultural base. The new airport will also help the agricultural sector by making it easier to export Grenada's tropical fruits and vegetables to outside markets.<sup>9</sup>

In Coard's words, construction of the airport would result in the removal of "the major bottleneck, the major fetter" to Grenada's development.<sup>10</sup>

The NJM's support for the building of a new airport was a recent development. In its 1973 Manifesto, the party explicitly argued that "we are not in favor of building an International Airport at this time." It did concede that Pearl's Airport "should be

upgraded and resurfaced." It argued that "what is desperately needed now is not an International Airport, but ownership of LIAT or some other regional airline by the Governments in the region . . ." The gist of the 1973 NJM position was that Grenada needed an upgrading of service. Such an upgrading could be accomplished by installing lights in the existing facility in order to permit night landings and by establishing a more responsive management at the headquarters of the regional carrier (LIAT), a task to be accomplished by nationalizing the firm.<sup>11</sup>

The 1973 NJM Manifesto was committed to tourism as a source of economic growth, but it went to great lengths in arguing that what was needed was a "new tourism." The industry which existed in the island at that time was described as "a major scandal" since it was largely foreign-owned, paid few taxes, and imported large quantities of food. To create a new tourist industry, the NJM argued, "... a first priority must be the complete nationalization of all foreign-owned hotels." With that done, the industry would become a market for locally-produced commodities. This would be feasible only if the industry shifted from the providing of luxury accommodations to more modest ones. A new market could be found among Latin Americans, black Americans, students, teachers, West Indians, and Africans "who would love to come here but cannot afford the present nonsensical prices."<sup>12</sup> These guests, it was believed, unlike more affluent tourists, would be satisfied to consume local foodstuffs and purchase domestically-produced goods.

There were thus very substantial differences between the airport/tourist strategy adopted by the PRG and the program envisioned by the NJM in 1973. Aside from the question of the airport, these differences centered on the ownership structure of the tourist industry and the market segment it would attempt to service. With regard to nationalizing privately-owned hotels to ensure local control of the industry, the government of Maurice Bishop reversed itself completely. In his speech concerning the airport, Bishop announced that "we are actively discussing with various local, regional and international private investors and with certain countries around the world the possibility of building more hotels, either as joint ventures with our government or individually on their own."<sup>13</sup> Concerning the question of marketing the country's tourism, there was continued talk about accommodating the moderate income consumer. However, the estimate

provided by the government that a 56 percent increase in arrivals would generate a tripling of revenues suggests that the government continued to plan with spending habits of relatively affluent consumers in mind. In addition, the prime minister, in his December 1979 speech on "the New Tourism," was quite explicit in noting that he now saw the attracting of non-affluent tourists to Grenada as only "providing a useful complement to other visitors in the so-called off season."<sup>14</sup>

It could be argued that these shifts in orientation were the result of the NJM's confronting the responsibilities associated with power. With regard to the domestic ownership of the industry, the government's retreat might have been associated with its recognition that managerial personnel were scarce in the country. The government already owned five hotels in Grenada, which were grouped together in the Grenada Resorts Corporation (GRC). But Coard revealed that both occupancy rates and productivity of these hotels were quite low and as a result the GRC had lost almost \$230,000 (EC) in 1982. Overstaffing, weak management, and inexperienced workers were cited by Coard as the causes of this short-fall. The latter two especially may have been important factors in the government's rethinking its attitude toward foreign ownership.<sup>15</sup> The retreat from the commitment to reorient the industry similarly can be explained on pragmatic grounds. Ambursley reported that the government saw tourism as a "cheap and effective way of earning the foreign exchange that is necessary to finance the island's growing import bill."<sup>16</sup> In this light, the reduced importance of "the new tourism" to the government was probably appropriate. For it was a virtual certainty that a reorientation of the industry in the way originally envisioned in 1973 would result in reduced foreign exchange earnings for the country. A cautious approach in this regard therefore was necessary for the industry to fill its income-earning function.

But at a more fundamental level, it seems likely that both of these retreats were unavoidable once the government committed itself to building a new airport. That project meant that Grenada under the PRG could not adhere to a policy of self-reliance. It could not afford to build the airport in the first place. Neither did it have the personnel and capital to operate an expanded tourist sector by itself, nor could it afford to reposition the industry in the market. Once the government became committed to the air-

port, in short, the shift to caution became the only practical course to follow. Equipment and management had to be imported from abroad, and a traditional market orientation for the industry became essential.

With that said, however, the PRG's commitment to tourism and the airport raises troubling questions. These questions have nothing to do with the American government's allegation that the airport would be used as a staging ground for regional revolution or terrorism sponsored by Cuba or Russia. No evidence has ever been provided to substantiate such charges. Indeed, one of the contractors associated with the construction of the facility, the British firm, Plessy Ltd., provided a list of equipment essential for a military airport but absent from Point Salines, including radar, parallel taxiways, and perimeter security.<sup>17</sup> The irony ultimately is that America itself was the first power to use the new air facility for military purposes.

The questions addressed here center on the issue of the viability of using tourism as a key sector in the promoting of Grenada's economic development. There is no doubt that there was the potential for expanding Grenada's tourist industry and that a new airport could aid in that process. The level of air service available to Grenada was inadequate. The problem was that Pearl's Airport lacked runway lights and thus planes were unable to land in the country after sunset. However, it was almost impossible for tourists traveling from North American or Europe to make a connecting flight to Grenada which could arrive on the island before dark. As a result, tourists were required to stay overnight in Barbados or Trinidad before going on to Grenada. As the prime minister himself put it, "coming to Grenada right now is like a labor of love. You have to be a martyr to want to come. The amount of trouble will make you sick." It was Bishop's hope that "what this airport will do is remove all of that trouble and inconvenience and allow our people to fly straight into our own airport."<sup>18</sup>

Whether, however, a new international airport was an efficient means for the PRG to realize the tourism potential is not self-evident. For, as Ambursley notes, the establishing of direct flights to Grenada from the United States would necessitate a bilateral aviation agreement between the two nations.<sup>19</sup> Failing this, American tourists, the principal consumers of Grenada's product, would still be required to change flights on another Car-

ibbean island, tending to offset some of the growth hoped for from the airport. The problem in this regard is easy to identify. With the completion of the airport, it is certain that the United States would resist coming to an air treaty until it had extracted major concessions from Grenada. In effect, the airport/tourist strategy would have strengthened the American bargaining position in its efforts to influence Grenadian policy, especially foreign policy. There is no way to know for certain how the PRG would have responded to emerging pressures to change its approach to foreign affairs in exchange for such an agreement. What is clear, however, is that the airport's completion would have given the Americans additional leverage in their relationship with the PRG, so dependent was the latter on tourism as a means for achieving economic advance.

At an even more fundamental level, there is a profound paradox for a leftist government like the PRG to be promoting tourism. There has been a long debate in the Caribbean precisely over the merits of the industry in stimulating economic development. Virtually without exception, the nationalist left in the region has taken the position that local benefits from this industry are frequently overstated and in any case not worth the cultural and political price which the creating of a "welcoming society" necessitates. The arguments for this skepticism have been generally convincing, and there is a fairly broad consensus, at least among academic students of the problem, that "tourism is useful as a means of diversification, but it is not advisable that countries should install this industry as the pivot of their economies . . ."<sup>20</sup>

The principal focus of an academic discussion of tourism has centered on the size of the multiplier associated with the industry.<sup>21</sup> By the multiplier is meant the change in domestic incomes which results from an initial increase in expenditures (in this case, tourist spending). The larger the multiplier, the greater the stimulative effect which can be assigned to the industry. This is because the higher the level of domestic income, the more domestic demand will be increased, resulting in a heightened probability that domestic production can be profitable. Thus if the multiplier were found to be on the order of 2.0 or 3.0, a case could be constructed that this industry might be beneficial to the growth process. Such a level would mean that the increased income flows generated in the economy would be considerable,

giving rise to the possibility of stimulating new industries. On the other hand, a multiplier of about 1.0 or less would raise questions about whether the promoting of this industry could satisfactorily stimulate the general development phenomenon.

The discussion of the size of the multiplier associated with tourism was initiated in May 1969 when, under contract to the USAID, H. Zinder and Associates prepared a report which claimed a multiplier effect of 2.3 in the Eastern Caribbean. On this basis, the authors estimated that the tourist industry was both exceedingly important in the economies of the region and embodied the potential for a considerable stimulative effect. As a result, the consulting firm recommended a series of proposals to stimulate the growth of the industry in the region.

The Zinder Report produced a firestorm of criticism. First, Kari Levitt and Iqbal Gulati wrote attacking the methods used in the Zinder Report's estimate of the multiplier. In reviewing the procedures employed in the Report, Levitt and Gulati concluded that "the authors do not appear to understand the elements of the theory of income multipliers."<sup>22</sup> This view was echoed by John Bryden and Mike Faber six months later when they wrote that "the Zinder tourist multiplier bears very little relation as it is used here to any multiplier employed by Samuelson or any other competent economist."<sup>23</sup>

Fundamentally, the problem with the Zinder Report was that it failed to respect the rule that only income received by residents should be included in the calculation of the multiplier. Instead, the Zinder multiplier was computed on the basis of the industry's gross receipts. To the extent that these receipts were used in the purchase of imports or were received by individuals abroad, however, such inclusion resulted in an overestimate of the domestic multiplier effect. In fact, when Levitt and Gulati recomputed the multiplier effect on a more appropriate basis, they estimated it to be about 1.0, while Bryden and Faber's recalculation placed it within a range extending from 0.60 to 0.88. Both studies were in agreement that an accurate estimate of the multiplier was "certainly nowhere near the value claimed for it by the Zinder Report."<sup>24</sup> With the reduction in the estimate of the multiplier came a corresponding reduction in the likelihood that the industry could substantially advance the development process.

In addition to the questionable economics involved in encouraging tourism as a leading sector in development, there are sociological and cultural questions which render such a project suspect. Ironically, it is the deeply conservative Trinidadian author V. S. Naipaul, who raises these questions most dramatically. Naipaul, in his 1969 work, *The Middle Passage, The Caribbean Revisited*, writes,

Every poor country accepts tourism as an unavoidable degradation. None has gone as far as some of the West Indies islands which, in the name of tourism, are selling themselves into a new slavery.<sup>25</sup>

Frank Taylor writes in the same vein: with tourism "the conception of the black masses as hewers of wood and drawers of water is still very much in evidence."<sup>26</sup> In his discussion of Jamaica's tourism, Taylor summarizes the case against the industry. First, he says, "it perpetuates the dependency syndrome in Jamaican society." Second, he notes the economic leakages which, as we have seen, result in a low value for the domestic multiplier. Third, Taylor points to the inflationary effect an expanding tourist industry has on land prices, a process which results in negative consequences for agriculture. Finally, he argues that the industry is unstable, an instability which would require the host country to go out of its way to be accommodating. From all of this, Taylor concludes with regard to Jamaica that "when viewed in its totality, therefore, tourism development has fundamentally promoted the underdevelopment of the island."<sup>27</sup>

There are, in short, very strong convictions present in the Caribbean concerning the debilitating effects of tourism. What makes the PRG's adoption of the airport/tourist strategy perplexing is that the NJM was part of the subculture from which these criticisms emanated. Indeed, most of Prime Minister Bishop's "new tourism" speech was concerned with the "old tourism" and his view that it had been "a means of increasing dependence on the metropole and of providing development for the few and underdevelopment for the vast, vast, majority of the people of our island."<sup>28</sup> Yet in official publications and addresses, members of the PRG reveal no doubt or hesitation concerning the path they had adopted. To be sure, there was discussion of the need to attract conferences and visits by support groups.<sup>29</sup> However, the scale of the industry envisioned with the new airport far exceeded the demand which could be expected from the "new"

tourist sources. At least tacit acceptance of a traditional approach to the industry was thus necessitated.

In this regard, the government in 1982 separated the Ministry of Tourism from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and launched a promotional campaign emphasizing the natural beauty of the island. Furthermore, during the prime minister's visit to the United States during the spring of 1983, his delegation promoted the island as a tourist resort. These promotional activities included a reception hosted by the minister of tourism, which attracted a large number of travel agents and tour operators.<sup>30</sup> Clearly the PRG was more engaged in the promotion of traditional tourism than it was experimenting with a downscaled alternative approach to the industry.

Aside from skepticism concerning the economic viability of using tourism to stimulate development, there is also a question whether the PRG could successfully have promoted a greatly expanded industry in Grenada. At one level, concern can be raised with regard to demand. Specifically, the issue of whether tourism consumers in large numbers could be expected to flock to an island under left-wing administration. Doubts in this regard stem from the fact that other islands, under more conservative rule, were competing for the same consumers. In this competition, Grenada would be at a disadvantage since North American tourists would tend to feel more comfortable visiting a country ruled by a more conventional regime than the PRG. In this context, furthermore, it could be expected that a hostile United States administration would make efforts to cast Grenada in an unfavorable light in an effort to erode the country's market share of the industry.

At another level, disquiet is raised in trying simply to envision the PRG promoting tourism. In effect, the members of the government would be required to implement policies which they simply did not believe in. Ambursley was correct when he wrote that "the expansion of Grenada's tourist industry will undoubtedly result in ever greater exposure to Western life-styles and consumption patterns, a development which would seem to undermine the regime's efforts to develop a socialist and collectivist consciousness amongst the masses."<sup>31</sup> Policymakers, in short, may well have found themselves at cross purposes in promoting this industry. They would attempt to earn needed foreign

exchange but at the same time, they would undermine the cultural and ideological foundation of their political project.

It is not possible to know how the PRG would have resolved this dilemma, but it is certain that the tensions involved would have resulted in ambivalent attitudes among at least some policymakers. With government officials both attracted and repelled by the industry, it is possible that tourist promotion might have been fitful and inconsistent. If so, it is hard to imagine that the industry would have been as successful as the country's development strategy required it to be. In the 1983 Budget, Coard referred to tourism as "a dynamic growth area of the future."<sup>32</sup> But in affirming the cause of tourism, the PRG was promoting an industry which possessed only a limited economic payoff and to which, in principle, it must have harbored strong political and cultural reservations.

### *Agricultural Policy*

In addition to tourism, the PRG's economic program emphasized the importance of stimulating agricultural output. In his 1983 Budget presentation, Coard declared that "agriculture is the main pillar of our economy." He went on to assert that "agriculture has to develop rapidly if we are to achieve certain goals of the Revolution." Among the goals cited were a reduction of imported food, the emergence of agro-industries, the earning of foreign exchange, increasing employment and raising the living standards of farmers and agricultural workers.<sup>33</sup>

The problem was that upon coming to power, the PRG confronted an agricultural sector which only to a very limited extent was capable of rapid development. Through the mid-and late-1970s, agriculture contributed about one-third of Grenada's output. About three-fifths of this output represented exports, principally cocoa, bananas, and nutmeg. The remaining two-fifths was composed of a variety of locally-consumed foodstuffs such as mangoes, avocados, coconuts, and other fruits and vegetables. As we have seen, however, from the mid-1970s to the early-1980s, agricultural export earnings had declined. In the case of non-export crops, production between 1975 and 1978 did increase, but a decline ensued in the following three years, after which production increases were achieved once again.<sup>34</sup>

TABLE III  
*Number of Holdings by Size Group in Grenada, 1975*

<i>Size of Holdings<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage of Total</i>
0-5 Acres	12,265	87.4
5-100 Acres	1,675	11.9
100+ Acres	99	0.7
Total	14,039	100.0

<sup>a</sup>Converted to acres by multiplying hectares by 2.47109.

Source: United Nations, ECLA, Office for the Caribbean, *Agricultural Statistics*, Vols. IV and V (1982); CEPAL, CAR1382/13, Table 6.

The organizational structure of Grenada's agricultural sector is the key to this relatively poor performance. As is the case with most of the rest of the region, the old-style plantation sector, with its masses of workers and economic dominance, no longer existed. What emerged in its wake was a dual agricultural sector composed of numerous very small farms co-existing with a relative handful of large holdings. As indicated in Table III, 87.4 per cent of the farms in Grenada were less than five acres. This means that for a very large percentage of Grenada's farmers, agriculture alone did not provide full-time employment. Furthermore, with such small holdings, the introduction of modern equipment, necessary to raise levels of agricultural productivity, was not feasible. At the other end of the spectrum, in 1975 there were 99 farms of 100 acres or more. Data are not available to indicate the share of the country's cultivated land contained in these holdings. However, the available data do indicate that 45.9 per cent of the country's cultivated acreage was in holdings of 50 acres or more. (See Table IV.) A rough guess, therefore, is that the largest farms in Grenada, representing less than one percent of the farms in the country, probably contained about one-third of the land in production. Obviously, for these farms the constraints which confronted the small farmers were non-existent and did not represent a source of technological conservatism. Nonetheless, it appears that the large farms too failed to provide Grenada's agricultural sector with the impetus necessary for the country's development. Here the problem seems to have been their failure to cultivate fully the land available to them. According to Coard, when the PRG took power in 1979, one-third of the cultivatable land in the country was unused. Coard observed

TABLE IV  
*Area of Holdings by Size Group in Grenada, 1975*

<i>Size of Holdings<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Percentage of Total</i>
0-1 Acres	2,511	5.4
1-5 Acres	10,514	22.5
5-10 Acres	4,910	10.5
10-25 Acres	4,732	10.1
25-50 Acres	2,607	5.6
50+ Acres	21,422	45.9
Total	46,696	100.0

<sup>a</sup>Converted to acres by multiplying hectares by 2.47109.

Source: United Nations, ECLA, Office for the Caribbean, *Agricultural Statistics*, Vols. IV and V (1982); CEPAL, CAR1382/13, Table 5.

that "by far the greatest amount of idle land lies on the big private estates." He decried the fact that "while most of our small and medium farmers are working their lands fully, there are thousands of acres of idle lands on many of the large privately owned lands."<sup>35</sup> This underutilization of land is attributed by Ambursley to the low level of land taxation in Grenada in conjunction with the fact that many of the big farms were held by absentee owners. He quotes a 1971 FINANCIAL TIMES survey of Grenada asserting that "the planting elite is not noted for its progressive ideas; estates are still run on primitive lines . . ."<sup>36</sup> Underutilization of cultivatable acreage and low levels of technology, in short, characterized agriculture in Grenada.

Thus Grenada's agricultural sector, like that elsewhere in the region, cried out for reorganization. As Alister McIntyre argues, there was a need to "make land reform the central element in the policy package" leading to agricultural modernization.<sup>37</sup> The problem is that even among those who agree with McIntyre on the need for land reform, no consensus exists regarding the shape a new agricultural sector should take. There are in the region proponents of a wide variety of schemes including settling farmers on small lots, establishing relatively large private farms, and creating state farms.

A modified small farm strategy was advocated for Grenada in 1970 by D. Noel and G. I. Marecheau, both of whom were then attached to the Grenada Agricultural Bank. Their effort was to combine the advantages of a small farm strategy with those of a



large unit size while at the same time avoiding the difficulties associated with each. They argued for settling farmers on relatively small holdings of two to ten acres. However, these farms were to be distributed around a "nucleus farm." The latter was the key to the modernization effort. It was to be "managed by a highly skilled agriculturalist . . . as a commercial unit in its own right." Its purpose was to "serve to demonstrate high standards of agricultural practices and so be an effective influence on the surrounding farms," as well as providing "infra-structural services" and other activities such as planning necessary road construction for the immediate area.<sup>38</sup>

In contrast, the New Jewel Movement in its 1973 Manifesto opposed a land settlement program resulting in such small units of production. Instead it echoed the standard of performance made in 1972 at the Tenth West Indies Agricultural Conference by L. G. Campbell. At that conference, Campbell argued that the aim in allocating land should be to allow farmers to achieve "an income no less than that earned by skilled workers in urban occupations or other business operations." To that end, he advocated lease holds of at least 25 acres.<sup>39</sup> In its Manifesto, the New Jewel Movement declared that "we will demonstrate that commercial farming can provide a decent and respectable standard of living as any other occupation." The NJM was also concerned that the agricultural sector be able to produce a large and steady supply of high quality commodities. The twin goals of high income and production levels, the Manifesto argued, "can only take place by radically redistributing the lands in Grenada." The proposal which the NJM offered was that units of 40 to 50 acres be created and that these farms be organized on a producer cooperative basis. The NJM insisted that "our basic policy for the organization of economic activity is through cooperatives." In this scheme, the land to be made available to the new cooperative sector would come from the large private estates. "To this end we intend to negotiate with the others in order to organize this scheme successfully," the NJM declared.<sup>40</sup>

Even as these schemes of land reform were offered, Eric Gairy himself adopted his "land for the landless" program and established a state farm sector in Grenada. However, unlike the proposals offered by Noel and Marecheau and the New Jewel Movement, where the intention was to increase agricultural productivity, Gairy's aim was wholly political in nature and pater-

nalistic in tone. By creating a governmental sector in agriculture, he was able to widen the scope of political patronage available to him. Under his program, the government purchased between 20 and 30 middle-sized farms. In some cases, the land on these holdings was allocated in small lots to individual farmers, while in others, state farms were established. Thus the prime minister positioned himself to reward his followers with either land or jobs. But whatever the political benefits which accrued to Gairy, the program did not result in an economic advance. According to Ambursley, "the net effect of the policy was to reduce the amount of land in productive use."<sup>41</sup> Even though a kind of land reform had been implemented, by the time the NJM came to power, the country was still a long way from possessing an agricultural sector capable of contributing to the process of economic modernization in Grenada. According to Prime Minister Bishop, the state sector created in this way was constituted by 30 estates which controlled about 4,200 acres. Thus the state sector had come to represent about 9 percent of the country's land under cultivation.<sup>42</sup> In 1982, the government passed a Land Utilization Act which allowed it to take out a compulsory lease of ten years on estates of over 100 acres on which land was idle or underutilized. According to Ambursley, this act signaled that "the state is gaining control over most of the large estates in the island and eradicating the planter class."<sup>43</sup> By October 1983, when it lost power, the government had not extensively employed this act, however. As a result, its ultimate intentions are unclear.

The organization of Grenada's agriculture was very similar under the PRG to what it had been prior to the NJM's accession. There remained a great many very small and fragmented farms which produced a variety of crops, including the three traditional exports. These small farms occupied only a small fraction of the country's cultivatable acreage. A handful of large private estates and state farms also were present, between them controlling probably half of the land in agricultural use.

The caution of the PRG with regard to agriculture did not reflect satisfaction on the part of the government with that sector's performance. Coard, in his 1983 Budget, reiterated the urgency of raising levels of agricultural productivity. He pointed to the need to introduce new methods of production and new crops and to raise the educational level of the agricultural labor



force. The deputy prime minister in 1983 was particularly critical of the functioning of the state farm sector. He pointed out that the Grenada Farms Corporation (GFC), the umbrella organization administering the government farms, had produced only 37 percent of its targeted output. He detailed the weaknesses of the organization and management of the corporation, even complaining that the GFC had not been able to supply his office with information essential to formulate the budget. Levels of productivity remained low: "on all of the GFC farms primitive methods of agriculture are still being used." As before, the labor force on these farms lacked education and adequate nutrition and were advanced in age. Furthermore, the GFC continued to practice mixed farming instead of specializing to gain greater efficiency. Overall, Coard concluded that the GFC "has not begun to fulfill the purpose for which it was created," namely the stimulating of the agricultural sector.<sup>44</sup>

The effort made by the PRG to promote cooperatives also had not yielded satisfactory results. Coard remarked that cooperatives were "growing slowly, because our youth are more interested in working with Government than in joining cooperatives."<sup>45</sup> This same pattern of reluctance to join cooperatives existed among small farmers as well. Even EPICA, which reported favorably on Grenada's cooperative sector — including the emergence of cooperatives among the youth — saw a problem in the small farm sector, noting that there the cooperatives had to confront the peasantry's "fierce tradition of independence."<sup>46</sup> In this reluctance to join producer cooperatives, Grenada's small farms resembled the peasantry throughout the region.<sup>47</sup>

With cooperatives resisted and with managerial incompetence hampering the state farms, the PRG decided to live with the status quo in the structure of the country's agriculture. It did so rather than adopt an agricultural reform strategy which would strengthen private farming in Grenada's agriculture. It neither advanced a land reform strategy in which holdings would be issued to farmers in relatively large lots on a lease-hold basis, nor did it turn to the kind of clustering of private farms around a nucleus farm as suggested by Noel and Marecheau. But the fact that the government did not adopt such proposals meant that as late as 1983, the PRG had not found an acceptable means to break the deadlock in agriculture it had inherited.

Very little has been written with respect to the PRG's problems with agriculture. The PRG's supporters approved its caution. The EPICA Task Force reported that "although peasant holdings are small, the PRG has avoided any action which would break up the functioning estates, since fragmentation often reduces productivity."<sup>48</sup> Ambursley, noting the PRG's conservatism in this field, argues that "a more radical transformation along the lines of the Cuban Revolution would be out of the question" for Grenada, since the country was so poor and "the island is too small to withstand such a momentous upheaval."<sup>49</sup> It is not clear how seriously the authors of these arguments meant them to be taken. The EPICA formulation, while it does identify a problem when it discusses land fragmentation, does not grapple with the question of how land reform might increase productivity. Similarly, Ambursley's concern with smallness of size, if it is not irrelevant, could just as easily be used to argue the relative ease with which structural change could be carried out. Finally, the fact of underdevelopment itself is not much of a reason to forego reform when precisely the intention of reform is to overcome underdevelopment.

Despite the failure of these commentators to confront the PRG's difficulties in agriculture, the fact remains that these problems loomed as a major troublespot for the regime, especially with regard to its longterm development efforts. For in fact, Coard was right when he said that agriculture was the "foundation for anything we shall achieve in the future."<sup>50</sup> The PRG's airport/tourist strategy critically depended on backward linkages to agriculture if it were to be successful in raising living standards in the country. The projected growth in tourism would create demand conditions which in turn would allow for an expansion of agricultural output. With increased agricultural production would come an increase in the income levels of large numbers of the Grenadian people. But for that to be realized, an agricultural structure had to be created to accommodate and facilitate expanded production. In its absence, an expanded tourist industry would be forced to import its food supply and as a result, whatever stimulative effect tourism might possess would be dissipated in a flood of imports.

In his discussion of the need for land reform to achieve modernization, McIntyre argued for the need to create "a new generation of farmers on economic units... businessmen, not

peasants."<sup>51</sup> By this he meant settling farmers on relatively large units. In that way, the farmers' full-time commitment would be ensured. In addition, such farmers would no longer be faced with an impenetrable resource constraint when they attempted to increase output and could adopt modern inputs and technology. They, in short, could become agents of agricultural modernization.

The PRG did not formally comment on McIntyre's proposal. But it is clear that it could not have been happy with his intention to settle private farmers on relatively large holdings. In a confidential Central Committee Resolution on Agriculture, the NJM had committed itself to the "strengthening of the State Sector" in agriculture and to beginning "the process of collectivization and transformation" of the countryside. The party's policy was to make the state-owned Grenada Farm Corporation "the leading vehicle . . . for the socialist transformation of agriculture." Specifically, this meant that land which became available to the government would not be allotted to private farmers but would be placed under the control of the GFC.<sup>52</sup>

The PRG strategy was to increase incrementally the state farm sector at the expense of the large private estates, while leaving untouched small farm holdings. The hope was that the state farms would be able, in time, to accommodate modern inputs and technology, thereby raising the level of agricultural productivity. This process would be further reinforced as graduates emerged from the country's newly established farm training schools and came to work on the government-owned farms. What, in this approach, the future held for the country's small farmers is not clear. Within the constraints imposed by their size, however, the government did also attempt to raise levels of productivity by providing an improved infrastructure and technical assistance.

If in fact the PRG intended to rely on the state sector to expand agricultural output rather than in promoting a progressive farmer approach like that advocated by McIntyre and Campbell, it was running a grave risk. It is no secret that elsewhere, especially in the socialist world, state farms have not proved themselves reliable vehicles of technological progress. Furthermore, Grenada's own experience in this regard, limited as it was, similarly was discouraging. Thus it was possible that if it chose to emphasize state farms, the government had adopted an

approach which, while perhaps ideologically attractive, might have left much to be desired with regard to the modernization effort.

### *Assessment*

Despite its intrinsic lack of appeal, the PRG accepted tourism as a leading sector in its development strategy. It was the area of activity which, it was hoped, would stimulate expanded output elsewhere, particularly agriculture. But the key to the process lay not only in attracting tourists to Grenada. It was also essential that the agricultural sector be structured to respond satisfactorily to expanded opportunities. What was needed was agricultural organizations capable of introducing the kinds of innovations necessary to satisfy the needs of a growing tourist sector. Thus it was that the institutional foundation of agriculture was a central determinant of the viability of the PRG's development strategy. If it turned out that Grenada's state farms in fact did not adequately promote technological progressivity and its small farmers were incapable of doing so, then the country's entire approach to development would be in peril.

The Grenada Revolution did not last long enough to judge the outcome of these difficulties. Certainly at the time of the demise of the regime, the country's agriculture had not yet been adequately transformed to meet the needs of the development strategy which had been adopted. If the airport had opened in 1984 as scheduled and if tourist arrivals had increased as expected, it is clear that the domestic food sector would not have proved immediately competent to meet the growing needs of the arriving guests. Food imports would have mounted in the absence of increased domestic food production. As a result, pressures would have also mounted to do something to increase the rural community's supply capability. But how the PRG would have responded to those pressures remains unknown. It is possible that with the passage of time, the state farms would have proved themselves adequate to the task. If so, then gradually the pressure on the regime would have dissipated. If these farms did not adequately allow increased production, the PRG would have been required to face some difficult choices. A failure by the state farms would have confronted the PRG with the necessity of considering the private commercialization of agriculture. At once

such an approach promised the modernization of that sector, but at the cost of introducing capitalist class relations in the countryside. As such, it would have been a difficult choice for the government to make. But if the regime had resisted establishing technologically progressive farmers, it might have been faced with perhaps an even more unpalatable choice. For, with the construction of the airport and the expansion of tourism, if agriculture failed to expand adequately, Grenada would find itself becoming precisely the kind of welcoming society which was so anathema to the Revolution's leaders and its supporters throughout the region.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Government of Grenada, with the assistance of the Caribbean Development Bank, *Economic Memorandum on Grenada*, Vol. I (February 1984), Table 2.2.

<sup>2</sup>Bernard Coard, *Report on the National Economy for 1981 and the Prospects for 1982* (St. George's, Grenada: 1982), p. 22.

<sup>3</sup>Fitzroy Ambursley, "Grenada: The New Jewel Revolution," in Fitzroy Ambursley and Robin Cohen, eds., *Crisis in the Caribbean* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), p. 204.

<sup>4</sup>Coard, *Report on the National Economy*, p. 44.

<sup>5</sup>Maurice Bishop, "Together We Shall Build Our Airport," March 29, 1981, in Bruce Marcus and Michael Taber, eds., *Maurice Bishop Speaks: The Grenada Revolution 1979-83* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1983), pp. 143, 145-146.

<sup>6</sup>Ambursley, "Grenada: The New Jewel Revolution," p. 219.

<sup>7</sup>Bernard Coard, "Extracts from Comrade Coard's Speech: Report on the National Economy for 1981 and the Prospects for 1982," in *To Construct from Morning: Making the People's Budget in Grenada* (St. George's, Grenada: Fedon Publishers, 1982) p. 17.

<sup>8</sup>*Maurice Bishop Speaks to U.S. Workers*, June 5, 1983 (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1983), p. 30.

<sup>9</sup>EPICA Task Force, *Grenada the Peaceful Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: EPICA Task Force, 1982), p. 69.

<sup>10</sup>*Proceedings of Aid Donors Meeting Held in Brussels at ACP House on 14 and 15 April 1981: International Airport Project — Grenada* (Brussels: Embassy of Grenada) (mimeo), p. 41.

<sup>11</sup>"1973 Manifesto of the New Jewel Movement" as reprinted in *Independence for Grenada — Myth or Reality?* Proceedings of a Conference on the Implications of Independence for Grenada, sponsored by the Institute of International Relations and the Department of Government, the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad, 11-13 January 1974, edited by the Conference Committee (Trinidad: Institute of International Relations, 1974), p. 149.

<sup>12</sup>"1973 Manifesto," p. 148.

<sup>13</sup>Bishop, "Together We Shall . . .," p. 145.

<sup>14</sup>Maurice Bishop, "The New Tourism," December 1979 speech, Didacus Jules and Don Rojas, eds., *Maurice Bishop selected speeches 1979-1981* (La Habana, Cuba: Casa de las Americas, 1982), p. 72.

<sup>15</sup>Coard, *Report on the National Economy*, p. 65.

<sup>16</sup>Ambursley, p. 219.

<sup>17</sup>The Plessy statement is contained in Latin America Bureau, *Grenada: Whose Freedom?* (London: Latin America Bureau [Research and Action] Ltd., 1984), p. 50.

<sup>18</sup>*Maurice Bishop speaks . . .*, p. 30.

<sup>19</sup>Ambursley, p. 217.

<sup>20</sup>B. Zorina Khan, "Overview on the Sociology of Tourism in Developing Countries," *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (May/June 1983), p. 11.

<sup>21</sup>In addition to an assessment of the multiplier effect, there has been an effort to apply cost/benefit analysis to the industry. Bryden's principal conclusion from this exercise was that an absence of data suggested that a "high priority be put on further research in this field," though he did indicate the his results indicated "a clear case for controlling the growth rate of the tourist industry much more rigidly than has hitherto been the practice of Caribbean governments." John M. Bryden, *Tourism and Development: A Case Study of the Commonwealth Caribbean* (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), p. 183.

<sup>22</sup>Kari Levitt and Iqbal Gulati, "Income Effect of Tourist Spending: Mystification Multiplied: A Critical Comment on the Zinder Report," *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (September 1970), p. 329.

<sup>23</sup>John Bryden and Mike Faber, "Multiplying the Tourist Multiplier," *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (March 1971), p. 67.

<sup>24</sup>Levitt and Gulati, p. 342; Bryden and Faber, p. 69.

<sup>25</sup>V. S. Naipaul, *The Middle Passage, The Caribbean Revisited* (London: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 210.

<sup>26</sup>Frank Taylor, *Jamaica — The Welcoming Society Myths and Reality*, Working Paper No. 8 (Kingston, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1975), p. 41.

<sup>27</sup>Taylor, p. 40.

<sup>28</sup>Bishop, "The New Tourism," p. 68.

<sup>29</sup>In his "Opening Address to a Conference on the Economy for Managers/ Heads of State Enterprises," 25 February 1982, Prime Minister Maurice Bishop discussed the need to hold more conferences in the country, to find more occasions like Carnival to attract tourists, to maintain links with support groups, and to promote tours based on professional interests. See *To Construct from Morning*, p. 92.

<sup>30</sup>Ambursley, pp. 206 and 217.

<sup>31</sup>Ambursley, p. 219.

<sup>32</sup>Coard, *Report on the National Economy*, p. 46.

<sup>33</sup>Coard, *Report on the National Economy*, p. 46.

<sup>34</sup>Government of Grenada, p. 15.

<sup>35</sup>Coard, *Report on the National Economy*, p. 50.

<sup>36</sup>Ambursley, p. 196.

<sup>37</sup>Alister McIntyre, "Adjustment of Caribbean Economies to Changing International Relations," in Lloyd B. Rankine, ed., *Proceedings of the Sixteenth West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference* (Trinidad: University of the West Indies, 1983), p. 19.

<sup>38</sup>D. Noel and G. I. Marecheau, "A Strategy for Development of Small-Scale Farming in the Commonwealth Caribbean with Special Reference to Grenada," in *Proceedings of the Fifth West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference* (Trinidad: University of the West Indies, 1970), p. 163.

<sup>39</sup>L. G. Campbell, "Strategy for Maximising Self-Sufficiency in Food in the Region," in S. C. Birla, ed., *Proceedings of the Tenth West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference*, Vol 1: Plenary Papers (Trinidad: University of the West Indies, 1977), p. 59.

<sup>40</sup>"1973 Manifesto . . ." pp. 147, 146, 149.

<sup>41</sup>Ambursley, p. 197.

<sup>42</sup>Maurice Biahop, "Work Towards Integrated Agricultural Development and Regional Co-operation," November 10, 1980, in Jules and Rojas, eds., *Maurice Bishop Selected Speeches 1979-1981*, p. 169.

<sup>43</sup>Ambursley, p. 205.

<sup>44</sup>Coard, *Report on the National Economy*, pp. 46, 49, 50, 51.

<sup>45</sup>Coard, *Report on the National Economy*, p. 31.

<sup>46</sup>EPICA Task Force, pp. 81, 105.

<sup>47</sup>Carl Stone, "Tenant Farming under State Capitalism," in Carl Stone and Aggrey Brown, *Essays on Power and Change in Jamaica* (Jamaica: Jamaica Publishing House, 1977), pp. 124, 131.

<sup>48</sup>EPICA Task Force, p. 77.

<sup>49</sup>Ambursley, p. 203.

<sup>50</sup>Bernard Coard, "Presentation of 1982 National Plan and National Budget," in *To Construct from Morning*, p. 118.

<sup>51</sup>McIntyre, p. 19.

<sup>52</sup>*Central Committee Resolution on Agriculture (Confidential)*, Control No. 100310, p. 1. See Chapter 4, footnote 1, for a further discussion of this source.

## Chapter 3

# PATERNALISM AND THE NEW DEMOCRACY

## A "New Democracy"

The promise of the People's Revolutionary Government in Grenada lay in two dimensions. First, it was a government seriously attempting to raise the living standards of the country's poor. It worked hard to reduce the unemployment rate and engaged in extensive efforts to improve the health care available to Grenada's households and individuals. It was committed to an extension of educational opportunities. Increasing the "social wage" in these ways was considered by the regime as "one of the most basic and concrete gains of the Revolution."<sup>1</sup>

In fact, the performance of the PRG in these and similar areas was quite impressive, especially when considered in the context of Grenada's underdevelopment. Indeed, the English-based Latin America Bureau, a group sympathetic to the NJM-led government, argued that "the real popularity of the PRG's policies lay with their commitment to providing the rudiments of a welfare system." With the Grenada Revolution, all medical care was made free and the per capita number of dentists and nurses was increased. New dental, casualty, and x-ray clinics were opened. In addition to these advances in medical care, educational programs in the country also were greatly enhanced. Milk and lunches at school were provided without cost, and fees at secondary schools were reduced, even as the number of seats at that educational level was increased. The government undertook as well an extensive housing program and increased the number of residences with access to piped water. In all, according to the Latin America Bureau, these programs "provided a tangible improvement in the quality of life and represented a substantial advance for a small and impoverished society."<sup>2</sup>

But even more important than its welfare performance, the government headed by Maurice Bishop was a source of hope for the future because it promised the creation of a new model of government for the people of the Caribbean. It was not only that the PRG was strongly motivated and relatively efficient in delivering services to the poor. The PRG's attractiveness lay in its promise that, in the words of one of its pamphlets, "is freedom we making"; it was engaged in the creation of a "new democracy" in Grenada.<sup>3</sup> The commitment to construct an indigenous and more deeply democratic political system than the one which had been inherited from colonialism spoke to the aspirations of a wide section of West Indian society. The government of the New Jewel Movement seemed to address the need, in Louis Lindsey's words, to replace the existing governmental form "... by a new system of government and a new breed of leaders, in the process creating political institutions which can mobilize the ... people into a new awareness of ourselves and the very great potential which lies within us."<sup>4</sup>

In its earliest political statement, the New Jewel Movement had identified itself with the need to recreate the politics of the region. In its 1973 Manifesto, written soon after it was formed, the NJM declared that the new society which it wished to create "must not only speak of Democracy but must practice it in all aspects." It called for a politics in which "power ... will be rooted in the villages and at our places of work." The New Jewel Movement thus committed itself to the task of establishing a form of democracy appropriate to Caribbean conditions and one which would allow power to "be in the hands of the people of the villages." To this end, the NJM proposed that upon first taking power, it would create a provisional government "which will be made up of all major groups, without regard to favour." Later on, a permanent governmental form would be established, based on a system of assemblies of the people. At the base of this system would be village and worker assemblies, with parish assemblies at the next highest level. Representatives of these bodies would be elected to a National Assembly which "will be the Government of the land." The new governmental form, pledged the NJM, "will involve all the people in decision-making all the time."<sup>5</sup>

The New Jewel Movement, like many organizations and individuals in the Caribbean searching for an alternative politi-

cal system, was severely critical of the parliamentary system endowed to the region by the British. The Manifesto argued that a party electoral system divides the people into "warring camps" and places power in the hands of a "small ruling clique." With this system, "... the ruling elite seizes control of all avenues of public information for example the radio station and use [sic] them for its own ends ... finally and most importantly," electoral politics "fails to involve the people except for a few seconds once every five years when they make an X on a ballot paper." In contrast, the system of People's Assemblies which the NJM proposed to create "will end the deep division and victimization of the people found under the party system." In this way, the NJM rejected a parliamentary electoral system as divisive and as an impediment to the mobilization effort essential in the region. In its place, it proposed a new system to "stress the policy of 'Self-Reliance' and 'Self-Sufficiency' undertaken cooperatively ... we will have to recognize that our most important resource is our people."<sup>6</sup>

The 1973 Manifesto was quite specific on the composition of the provisional government which the NJM promised it would create upon assuming office. The provisional government would "be made up of all major groups, without regard to favour — GULP, GNP, JEWEL alike," as well as representatives of workers and unions, farmers, police, civil servants, nurses, teachers, businessmen and students." According to the Manifesto, "these groups will be consulted in advance and they will choose their own representatives on the government. That assembly, made up of representatives of all groups in the island will be the government." Later on, declared the NJM, "after consultations with the people at large and with their assent, People's Assemblies will be implemented." Thus the proposals in the Manifesto attempted to avoid having leadership devolve to one organization or constituency. It looked to create political structures in which all such elements in Grenadian society would be represented and would be able to participate in the decision-making process.<sup>7</sup>

Nine years later, it was to the 1973 Manifesto that Bernard Coard, in power, appealed in explaining the politics of the PRG. Interviewed concerning the government's budgetary process, Coard declared that "one must remember that basically the New Jewel Movement was born in March of 1973 as a reaction to and

repudiation of old-style, Westminster-style party politics . . .” In describing that system he invoked some of the same language which had been used then. Coard recalled that the 1973 New Jewel document symbolized “contempt for the traditional party political system and for Westminster hypocrisy plus a rejection of the model of the division of the people rather than the unity of the people in the process of economic and general political development.” He argued that “it is out of the context of political tribalism of dividing a working people of a country” that the New Jewel Movement developed. The movement and its politics spoke to the fact that “a poor country . . . needs all of its human resources engaged in one direction at a time for national development.” It represented “a direct response to those divided politics and the total corruption of the electoral process and its non-meaningful nature as an instrument of real democracy.”<sup>8</sup>

But, as we have seen, by the time the New Jewel Movement came to power in March 1979, it was a very different party than the one which had been created in 1973, and the political institutions it constructed were quite different from those discussed in 1973. According to Selwyn Strachan, a founder of the party and a Government Minister in the PRG, the party “started off as what we would call a revolutionary party, a revolutionary democratic party. We never called ourselves socialist at the beginning.” However, with the passage of time, according to Strachan, “as we got more and more mature we were able to work out a clearer ideological position.”<sup>9</sup>

### *The Non-Capitalist Path*

The reorganization of the NJM and its becoming a Leninist organization meant three things. First, internally the party functioned “on the strictest principles of democratic centralism.”<sup>10</sup> Second, it adopted the position that it stood in a vanguard position relative to the Grenadian society. Thus Selwyn Strachan, in discussing the possibility of workers raising their own demands or mobilizing themselves outside the context of the party, declared in November 1979 that “I don’t see spontaneous reactions. We feel that everything has to be properly guided” by the party. Finally, the party accepted the position that the country should adopt the strategy of the “non-capitalist path of development.” According to Strachan, in this way the country’s

productive forces could be strengthened while “bypassing capitalist development” and preparing it to ultimately construct socialism.<sup>11</sup>

These are the commitments which underlay Maurice Bishop’s characterization of the Grenada Revolution. In an unpublished interview, Bishop described the Grenada Revolution in the following way:

fundamentally as a national democratic anti-imperialist revolution, involving the alliance of many classes; including sections of the small bourgeoisie but under the leadership and the dominant role being played by the working people and particularly the working class through their vanguard party the New Jewel Movement.<sup>12</sup>

In its conceptualization of the Grenadian Revolution, the NJM accepted the Soviet analysis of the “non-capitalist path of development” or “socialist orientation.” According to V. Solodovnikov and V. Bogoslovsky, “the basic content of non-capitalist development does not consist of socialist but general democratic transformation.” The list of such transformations provided by Solodovnikov and Bogoslovsky is a long one and includes many of the efforts made by the PRG;

undermining the domination of imperialism in the given country; gradual nationalisation of big national capital; creation of a profitable state sector; anti-feudal and agrarian transformation with the participation and in the interests of the peasants; improving the condition of all working people through progressive labour legislation; development of education and health care; providing for broader influence of the masses on state policy; regulation — and in the future, also limitation — of the development of middle and small national capital; and broad cooperation with socialist states.<sup>13</sup>

In adopting a “socialist orientation,” the Grenadian political leadership believed that it was following in the footsteps of the Cuban Revolution. Strachan argued the case directly when he said, “We believe that our course of development will be more or less the same as the Cuban Revolution. There may be one or two minor differences, but nothing dramatic.” In this regard, Strachan was confident that “we are adopting the correct approach according to the laws of historical development.”<sup>14</sup>

One aspect of the Cuban experience adopted by the NJM was the prominence given to foreign policy. From virtually the first day of the Revolution, when Grenada and the United States squabbled over Grenada’s relations with Cuba, foreign policy

concerns were of great importance to the PRG. As Bishop remarked in a speech in November 1981, "We have always scrupulously avoided viewing our struggle, our revolutionary process, from a narrow nationalist perspective. We have long understood that the world revolutionary process, the struggle of oppressed mankind everywhere is one and indivisible."<sup>15</sup>

But if the leaders of the PRG aspired to a foreign policy which would strengthen their relations with the Soviet bloc, it was not easy for them to do so. Early and close relations with Cuba were established, but it was much more difficult for the leaders of the Grenada Revolution to develop close ties with the Soviet Union itself. Furthermore, the support received from Cuba was associated with growing tensions with the United States, a problem which was to plague the PRG throughout its entire tenure in power.

Within the first month of the Revolution, the United States and Grenada were in conflict over Cuba. In a speech on April 13, 1979, Bishop reported that the United States Ambassador, in informal conversations, had stressed that his country would view with displeasure "the development of any relations between our country and Cuba." He quoted from an official diplomatic note from the United States:

Although my government recognizes your concern over allegations of a possible counter-coup, it also believes that it would not be in Grenada's best interest to seek assistance from a country such as Cuba to forestall such an attack. We would view with displeasure any tendency on the part of Grenada to develop closer ties with Cuba.

This statement, placed against the background of the United States not offering the PRG anything to defend itself against a military attack, while Cuba had agreed to do so, provoked a scathing reply by Bishop. He declared that "we reject *entirely* the argument of the American ambassador that we would only be entitled to call upon the Cubans to come to our assistance *after* mercenaries have landed and commenced the attack." He went on,

quite frankly, and with the greatest respect, a more ridiculous argument can hardly be imagined. It is like asking a man to wait until his house is burning down before he leaves to buy a fire extinguisher. No, we intend if possible to provide ourselves with the fire extinguisher before the fire starts! And if the government of Cuba is

willing to offer us assistance we would be more than happy to receive it.<sup>16</sup>

Predisposed ideologically to forge close ties to Cuba, it was in the hot-house atmosphere of the first days of the revolution, and in the face of American insensitivity if not hostility, that close ties between the PRG and the Cuban government and a close personal relationship between Fidel Castro and Maurice Bishop were established.

But it was much more difficult for the leaders of the NJM to develop bonds of trust with the Soviet Union. At no time during their years in power were the leaders of the NJM comfortable with the level of support they received in Moscow. Thus in mid-1982, the Grenada Embassy reported to St. George's that "our party is not fully known; the Soviet comrades are gathering information about NJM and the peculiar conditions of the region and that is why they are dealing with us cautiously and sometimes skeptically."<sup>17</sup> As late as July 1983, much the same was heard, this time from W. Richard Jacobs, the ambassador, who complained that "considering the risks that we have taken . . . it might be fair to say that their support for us is actually below our support for them."<sup>18</sup>

The difficulty the Grenadians encountered with the Russians, of course, devastates the Reagan Administration's argument that Grenada was a surrogate for Russia and Cuba. In the first place, it is clear that Cuba was much more forthcoming in its attitude toward the PRG than the Soviet Union and that the two countries differed in their assessments of the Grenada Revolution. Indeed, while complaining that the Russians were "mad-deningly slow in making up their minds about who to support," Grenada's ambassador reported that the support received was due to the way the PRG conducted its affairs and because "Cuba has strongly championed our cause."<sup>19</sup> The Cubans, in fact, counselled patience, with Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, a leading figure in the Cuban Revolution, himself indicating that it had taken that country fully fifteen years to establish close relations at the highest party-to-party level.<sup>20</sup> In the second place, it is also clear that it was much more than a case of Grenada looking for support from the Russians than the Russians trying to use Grenada. Thus in a report home, Ambassador Jacobs worried that "by itself, Grenada's distance from the USSR and its small size, would mean that we would figure in a very minute way in the



USSR's global relationships." For Grenada "to assume a position of increasingly greater importance" in Russian eyes, according to Jacobs, "we have to establish ourselves as the authority on events in at least the English speaking Caribbean" and engage in such activities as the biannual meetings with left parties in the region to which the PRG had already committed itself.<sup>21</sup> At no time is there evidence that the Soviet Union looked to Grenada as any kind of staging area. Rather, it was reported back to Grenada that the Caribbean is "quite frankly not one of their priority areas" and "furthermore the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] has historically been very cautious in developing relations with parties that are new to them." Nonetheless, it was still possible for Grenada "to become more central to the CPSU in terms of its thinking and planning" if the PRG showed itself to be stable and consistent politically and possessing "an interest in developing relations."<sup>22</sup>

Thus it was important to the leadership of the NJM that Grenada demonstrate to the Russians that its Revolution was worthy of support. Increasingly, they were successful in doing so. In July 1983, Ambassador Jacobs reported that Grenada was now considered by the Russians to be in the "national democratic, anti-imperialist stage of socialist orientation" and that the New Jewel Movement was considered to be a "communist party." Both of these designations were favorable. The first meant that Grenada was on the path of "socialist orientation" and, reported Jacobs, "in terms of the Russians' priorities the countries of socialist orientation come right after the socialist community." The second meant that the NJM was "treated as a fraternal party, i.e. — a Marxist-Leninist Party." Furthermore, prospects for future favorable assessments also were good. As the Ambassador put it, since "the CPSU is in a position to know almost everything about the NJM, its size, programme, objectives, orientation, etc. — they cannot fail to recognize and accept the authenticity of our credentials."<sup>23</sup>

It is clear that the NJM had accepted the ideological hegemony of the Marxist-Leninist parties associated with the Soviet bloc. The NJM's view of itself — how it was to be organized, the means by which it was to exercise leadership, what goals it should set for itself and how it should conduct its foreign affairs — was generated in the ideological world view associated with those parties. Such an ideological allegiance in no way sug-

gests that Bishop and his followers were somehow less authentic Grenadian nationalists and revolutionaries than if they had not adopted that world view. Indeed, the leadership of the NJM believed that it was in its adherence to the conceptualization of the revolutionary process associated with Russia's leadership that they best were able to serve the interests of their country. The ideological position associated with the Russian version of Marxism-Leninism was believed to be scientific, providing the insight into both the needs and the means which could best promote Grenada's well-being. Hence there never was any question in the minds of the party's leadership of choosing between serving Grenada and allegiance to Soviet theory. In that allegiance lay the possibility of success for the Grenada Revolution.

### *Paternalistic Socialism*

Aside from foreign policy, the socialist bloc provided the model of internal governance which the NJM adopted for Grenada. In this model, the leading party acts as if it were a signatory to a social contract. In this arrangement, mutual responsibilities and benefits are implicitly defined. In exchange for the people ceding to the party the responsibility to govern, the party promises to implement policies which would be benevolent and promotive of the welfare of the population. In its fundamentals, this relationship corresponds to John W. Bennett's description of the "benevolent mode of paternalistic action where the superior person's action was dominantly supportive of the inferior."<sup>24</sup> With paternalism, a dialogue among equals is ruled out. The ruling party may be responsive to what it perceives to be the needs of the people, but the decision to be so is its own. The people may not organize politically and demand. They must rely on the good intentions and capacity of the ruling party.

In this model of paternalistic socialism, the leading party claims to embody within itself the interests and aspirations of the masses of the population. It therefore is to be relied upon to work hard and conscientiously to advance the people's interests. This is especially the case with regard to providing basic needs such as food, medicine, and education. According to the theory, it is in the pursuit of these goals that the party will mobilize the people on the community level, both in order to facilitate the accomplishing of specific goals and in order to heighten con-



sciousness. In this model, then, there is no positive function to be filled by placing the party's leadership of society at risk through national elections. Such elections are seen to be divisive in any case, and if an opposition party were to be victorious, its success would only set back the process of revolutionary advance.

In a speech on November 21, 1982, Bishop enumerated the component elements of his alternative vision of a democratic system. Such a system would require "much more than just a tweedledum and tweedledee election, more than just a rum and cornbeef convention, more than just a five second in five years right to put an X" on a ballot. For Bishop, the essentials of democracy were "responsibility, accountability, mechanisms for our people to participate and benefits for our people." The first of these, responsibility, meant

the politicians must work according to a plan that the people accept and not a plan that they decide to set on their own. They must make sure that on a regular basis through their contact with the people they tell them whether they are happy or unhappy with what they the leaders are doing.

Accountability concerns the people's "right on a regular basis (at least once a month) of ensuring that the political leaders go and face the people and tell the people how the work plan is going, how you are carrying out their mandate and their ideas." According to Bishop, "the politicians must intermix with the people, must ensure that the opinions, views and changing moods of the people are considered, or else you have no democracy."

Mechanisms for people to participate necessitates "that on a regular basis the people through their own grassroots organizations are able to meet and look at the problems of the country, come up with solutions and then implement the solutions which are found for these problems."

Finally, with regard to providing benefits to the people, Bishop cited his government's successes in the fields of health and education as well as the fact that in Grenada under NJM rule the proportion of workers in unions had doubled. Democracy for Bishop and the New Jewel Movement, in short, was a system in which, in various contexts, the population discusses its problems, receives reports from managers, as well as receiving monthly reports from "the very top leadership of the party" who will account "to the people on what they are doing." According to

the prime minister, "if you want an example of accountability of responsibility, of participation — come to Grenada and see our mass organizations in action."<sup>25</sup>

Democracy, in Bishop's view, was the process by which institutions are provided at various levels in the society to allow the people and their leaders to communicate with each other. The presumption is that the leaders will explain to the people what they are attempting to do in order to enlist the support of the population, while at the same time the people will communicate back to the politicians concerning their reactions to ongoing programs and offer proposals for new undertakings. There is, however, an obvious gap in this scheme concerning the selection process of the leadership. Bishop argued that democracy was present in Grenada because the people were able to discuss their problems with the country's leaders in zonal and parish councils, as well as those composed of workers, farmers, women, and youth. But only elliptically did he address the question of who became a leader in Grenada and how the selection process was undertaken. He did note that the mass organizations were supposed to elect their own leaders every two years. These spokesmen for the mass organizations were clearly subordinated to the national leaders with whom they were to communicate. On the nature of this "top leadership," Bishop was silent.

The NJM described the political system which, once in power, it attempted to create as a "new democracy."<sup>26</sup> In some respects, this "new democracy" sounds similar to the NJM's 1973 proposal. Then it had called for a "new form of government" and a system of "People's Assemblies." In power, the NJM declared that it wanted to encourage "the growth of vocal and vibrant people's organizations" and argued that under its rule, the State "actively stimulates and creates the conditions for the healthy growth of mass organizations . . ." The aim, in words reminiscent of the 1973 Manifesto, was "to involve every Grenadian in the direct exercise of political power." The NJM claimed for itself "a truly impressive upsurge of popular participation" through the mass organizations which had been created: the Parish and Zonal Councils, Farmers' Unions, Trade Unions, Community Work Brigades, the National Students' Council, the Pioneer Movement, the National Youth Organization, the National Women's Organization, NJM Party Support Groups, and the People's Militia.

But though these organizations sound similar to the grassroots organizations which the 1973 NJM would have supported, there was a profound difference on the question of leadership between the position it adopted then and the position it defended after 1979. As we have seen, the early NJM was extremely suspicious of self-appointed leaders. It had declared in perhaps a piece of unintended irony that "we feel that leaders are not necessarily born or come from the East but are made."<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, after seizing power, Bernard Coard was proud to declare that "we cannot ask the people to do anything unless we are . . . prepared to work hard in this process."<sup>28</sup> In this regard, declared Coard,

the party has been critical, has been decisive in building the mass organizations of our people, in building the People's Militia which involves all our people in the defence of the country, in building democracy to the people . . .<sup>29</sup>

In short, the leadership of the NJM was essential to the "new democracy."

Thus it was that the relationship between the mass organizations and the NJM and the general question of leadership was resolved. The mass organizations were to be led by NJM members but were to be open to people who were not necessarily members of the party. They were to be addressed by managers and officials of public institutions as well as by the "top leadership" of the New Jewel Movement itself. In turn, they were to provide feedback to the leadership of the party, which feedback they could expect to be taken seriously. They would also mobilize their own constituents for specific projects. It was through this pattern of relationships, claimed the government, that "the people of Grenada are feeling their way toward a mode of genuine self-government . . ."<sup>30</sup>

### *The Content of the "New Democracy"*

Much of the criticism which has been made of the NJM rule has centered on the fact that the party reneged on the promise it initially made to hold elections. Thus Maurice Bishop, on the day of the overthrow of Gairy, in his address to the nation, declared "let me assure the people of Grenada that all democratic freedoms including freedom of elections, religious, and political opinion will be fully restored to the people."<sup>31</sup> Later that year in an

interview, he affirmed that the revolution took place "in order to introduce democracy and free, fair elections." In response to a direct question, he affirmed, "Yes, we intend to honor that promise" and noted "we intend very soon to begin a process of enumeration of voters around the country."<sup>32</sup>

The NJM's retreat from this commitment was expressed at a political rally in November that year by Strachan, who declared that the March 13 overthrow had been the "fairest election Grenada has ever had since it was achieved on the basis of one man, one gun." By then, Ricky Singh, a journalist friendly to the new Grenada government, was referring to the commitment to elections in the past tense, musing that Bishop's not having "followed through with his promise to hold early elections [was] a political judgment that must cause him a lot of anguish."<sup>33</sup> Soon thereafter the attitude of the government toward elections became distinctly negative. As articulated by Cabinet member Kenrick Radix, the position became "elections are not an issue in Grenada." Repeating the NJM's long-standing hostility to electoral politics and parties, Radix went on, "people now see a lot of change — roads being built, buses on the roads, the airport, free education. Whenever the masses want elections, they'll get them."<sup>34</sup>

From this transition period emerged the position that not only were elections irrelevant but the NJM should be the single political party in Grenada. This position was publicly most fully articulated by Bernard Coard, the deputy prime minister. Coard pointed out that "fundamentally it was the Party which led the attack upon Trueblue Barracks on March 13, 1979. He continued, "it was all party comrades who did that and then called upon the people to take to the streets and unarmed, to seize the police stations. So just like the Party led that struggle to bring victory to the people militarily speaking, the Party had led all the people's political struggles under the dictatorship, leading up to that moment of Revolution." It was in light of this history of leadership, Coard argued, "now it is the Party's task to lead the struggle for the defence of the country, lead the struggle to build a People's Militia, lead the struggle through the people and our small People's Revolutionary Army against external aggression — but also to lead the struggle on the economic front."<sup>35</sup>

One line of criticism made of the PRG is that the regime's failure to hold elections was a tactical error which robbed it of the legitimacy a victorious electoral campaign would have given it.<sup>36</sup> More hostile critics point to the failure to hold elections as evidence of the anti-democratic designs of the regime. To these commentators, a parliamentary electoral process is democracy: its absence therefore defines a political system as non-democratic. Since, as we have seen, from its earliest days, the NJM was hostile to the Westminster model, it is obvious that by this test any government which it would have formed would be considered undemocratic. It is important, however, to assess the democratic content of the government formed by the NJM by a more relevant set of standards than the mere existence of national elections. These standards should at once be demanding with respect to the democratic content of life in the nation but should not equate democracy solely with the presence of the Westminster model.

To establish whether a new democracy actually was under construction in Grenada, it is necessary, therefore, to investigate the actual behavioral content of the organizations established by the PRG. To the extent that they facilitated the process by which people could advocate policies and organize to pressure for their adoption, they were instruments of self-government. If, however, the mass organizations merely served to create settings in which the people were instructed or manipulated by the country's leaders, then no such democratic outcome was present.

But it is precisely concerning the actual functioning of the institutions of "the new democracy" about which profound disagreement exists among observers of the Grenada Revolution. To Anthony Maingot, they contained precious little democratic content. He writes, "there was a hierarchy of command and power trickled down. The party's central committee, not any people's assemblies, provided the leadership . . . 'mass organizations' were led by the inner circle." To Maingot, the effort was to direct the nation to "Leninist party-directed objectives . . ."<sup>37</sup>

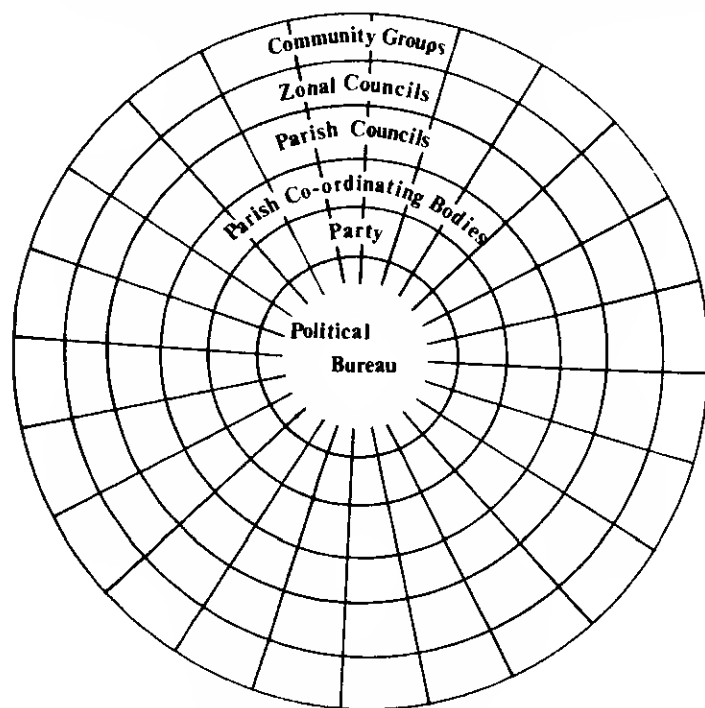
On the other hand, the EPICA Task Force was generally sympathetic to the NJM's critique of Westminster politics and commented favorably on the new system which was being created. The EPICA authors wrote that "in Grenada today, government has moved out of York house and into community centers, school buildings, farms and workplaces: everywhere where people gather." The Task Force noted that "Grenada's new demo-

cratic structures are not yet fully formed" and that the decentralization which was occurring in Grenada "cannot occur overnight in a society which has never known anything but colonialism and dictatorship: a society in which the people have never been allowed to make decisions about their own affairs." Nonetheless, the report concluded that these "new democratic structures are evolving and expanding day by day, and are undergoing a period of testing by the people before any decisions are made on their final form."<sup>38</sup>

It seems clear that the EPICA Task Force did not fully appreciate the centralizing bias which was present in Grenada's political structure. Even the government's own supporters, like Hodge and Searle, acknowledged that "the NJM continues to provide both the mobilizing energy and organizational initiative" in the Grenada Revolution. Though the latter deny that policy in Grenada was imposed by the ruling party, they provide an organization chart of Grenada's politics which shows the Political Bureau of the party and the party itself at the center of the system of coordinating bodies and Parish, Zonal, and Community Centers, and groups. (See Figure 1.) Yet at the same time, it is also likely that the party in its coordinating function did respond to and benefit from the feedback it received from these councils and groups, and that Maingot's formulation fails to capture the importance of this feedback mechanism. A sympathetic critic of the NJM, Ambursley acknowledged that "all major pieces of legislation passed since 13 March 1979 have only been effected after the most elaborate process of consultation and discussion with the mass organizations and representative bodies." Conceding that "the ultimate power to make decisions still resides in the hands of the PRG," Ambursley nonetheless argued that "what exists in Grenada today, then, is a form of revolutionary direct democracy."<sup>39</sup>

The budgetary process instituted in 1982 is illustrative of the political system which was emerging in Grenada. In this process, a draft budget prepared by the government was brought before the mass organizations for review and discussion. These consultations culminated in a national conference made up of delegates from the local organizations. From these meetings emerged detailed comments and recommendations which were to be considered by the government as it revised and put into final form the original draft budget. In his speech in March 1982

FIGURE 1  
Political Organization of People's Revolutionary Government



Source: *Is Freedom We Making: The New Democracy in Grenada* (St. George's, Grenada: Fedon Publishers, 1980), p. 41.

to the final conference, Bernard Coard declared that in this process, "our people's voices were echoing right across the land" and that "we have tried to deliberately scoop up the ideas and options of literally every sector of our nation, leaving nothing to chance or to guess work." Coard argued that in the course of these discussions, common themes were sounded throughout the nation and this "told us much about the central and underlying unity of our people and their aspirations."<sup>40</sup>

In his reassertion of the unity of the Grenadian people, Coard recalled a basic premise of NJM politics and the underlying foundation of its attack on parliamentary democracy. The NJM long believed that electoral politics divides a population

which otherwise would be largely united. It was this concern for unity and the NJM's search for political institutions to reinforce that unity which was the touchstone of its political structure. Thus it was that Coard could say that "our mass organizations are not little social clubs or talk-shops. They bring us closer together and bind us in unity as a people . . ."<sup>41</sup> And thus it was that in a self-congratulatory context, the deputy prime minister, in reviewing the budgetary processes, recorded that "what we found as a result of all these sessions was an amazing commonality of opinion in all the villages of our country. People in Tivoli were making the same point as those in St. George's, Gouyave was echoing St. David . . ."<sup>42</sup>

But in fact, the budgetary process reveals just how profoundly the system of government adopted by the PRG failed to provide the mechanisms essential for self-governance. The process itself reflected both the dominance of the party and how that dominance acted to block the development of a serious popular politics in the country. Each of the meetings which were held concerning the budget was expected to draw up a list of suggestions and proposed modifications. Thus the Zonal Council meeting which was held at the Birchgrove Roman Catholic School on February 12, 1982, drew up a list of twenty-nine suggestions, ranging from increasing the fines on ganja (marijuana) smoking to a cutback on food provided for prisoners and detainees. The meeting at Concord in the Parish of St. John's broke into four workshops and reported thirty-six recommendations. The St. Patrick's Workers Council meeting on February 18 organized itself into three workshops and provided thirty-five recommendations. The St. David's Roman Catholic School offered a suggestion for opening up new agricultural lands by constructing a feeder road while the discussants at St. Paul's Model School urged a cut-back on the importing of canned vegetables as a means of stimulating local production. There is thus no reason to doubt that at these meetings serious and earnest discussions occurred.

But the point is that these deliberations in fact resulted only in the compilation of a wish list. What these meetings represented was only a first step in the process of budget revision. It is only after the desires of the population are articulated that the real process of politics — self-governance — gets underway. In any society it is easy enough to provide an inventory of needs and

good ideas. Politics begins when priorities among these needs and good ideas must be established, when discussions center not on desires in the abstract but on preferences among sought-after goals. Politics, like economics, is concerned with how much of one thing a community is willing to give up in order to gain something else.

It is clear that such discussions concerning the intensity of preferences among goals did not occur in the meetings which were held concerning the budget. The ranking of priorities and identification of targets was left to the leadership to whom the people in the mass organizations were directing their requests. For example, the St. Patrick's Workers Council Workshop Number 3 offered as one recommendation that "suitable land should be used to grow more sugar cane," while another recommendation which it offered was that the country should "produce more food."<sup>43</sup> Now it happens that the question of the priority which should be assigned to domestic food production as compared to export agriculture of crops like sugar is the subject of lively debate in the Caribbean and to date no consensus has formed on the subject. But the point is that in a land-scarce setting like that of Grenada, choices in land use patterns must be made. To say that more of both food crops and sugar should be produced does not confront the real difficulties which face a small society in which one might be increased only at the expense of the other. The report of the St. Patrick's Workers Council therefore only introduced what admittedly is an important topic for discussion. In this way, the substantive decision concerning the use of Grenada's agricultural land was left to the leaders of the party, since the zonal meeting was not structured to have its participants deal with the relationships which existed among the two goals. If the meetings had been organized to allow opposing viewpoints to contest each other, then it is clear that on a subject such as land use, an embryonic pluralism would have emerged in which some would argue for the desirability of export agriculture and others for the importance of the production of domestic foodstuffs.

That neither this kind of micro-pluralism nor any broader scale contesting of viewpoints by the population was permitted is indicated by a variety of actions taken by the PRG. In mid-1979, several efforts were made by the Grenada National Party (GNP) and its leader, Herbert Blaize, to hold a meeting in St. George's.

In each case, these attempts "were thwarted because of the large number of PRA [People's Revolutionary Army] present and because unruly elements chose to stone the speakers despite the large PRA presence — and no one was arrested."<sup>44</sup> The significance of the inability of the GNP to hold meetings lies in the fact that it had been a party untainted by Gairyism. In fact, it had been an important element in the coalition which the NJM itself joined for the elections held in 1976. The officially countenanced harassment had its predictable effect, and by the end of the first year of the revolution, the GNP and all other non-NJM political organizations had given up their efforts to sustain themselves as active political entities.

A similar policy of repression was followed with regard to the press. In 1979, the country's one newspaper, the *Torchlight*, was shut down, accused by the government of working with the American Central Intelligence Agency to destabilize the regime. Then in 1981, a new paper, the *Grenadian Voice*, sponsored by local businessmen and professionals, was closed after its second issue, with the government arguing that its legal appearance awaited the formulation by the PRG of a media code — a code, by the way, which never appeared. Finally, the local Catholic Church's effort to have its *Catholic Focus* appear also were thwarted.<sup>45</sup>

In reply to critics of these actions, the prime minister was unapologetic. He argued that before the Revolution there were two newspapers, but with the coming to power of the NJM, there were "really over twelve different newspapers in our country apart from the *Free West Indian*," the NJM's own paper. In defense of this contention, he enumerated the various newspapers published by the mass organizations in the country. Prime Minister Bishop asserted that through these newspapers, "the people in their sections and in their groupings are now able to come out and speak for themselves, through their own voice"; he also declared, "that is what we call freedom of the press."<sup>46</sup>

This argument clearly was specious. All of the newspapers cited by the prime minister, precisely because they were the organs of the mass organizations, were in fact controlled by the New Jewel Movement and as such adhered to the party's position concerning dissent. To have read and believed that the press cited by Bishop reflected the full range of opinions in the nation was to conclude that on all of the issues which faced the country,

virtually unanimity prevailed. More plausible, however, is the view that points of view outside a rather narrow band encompassing the official position of the party simply did not receive a hearing in these outlets.

Finally, it is in this context that the regime's refusal to hold national elections can be assessed. There is some obvious merit to the critique of the Westminster model that full participation in the political and decision-making life of the community is not assured by periodic elections. It is also true that an electoral system may serve to legitimate the leadership of those who already command authority. Especially this is likely in a context of substantial inequality with respect to wealth and education and where there is a pattern of racial hierarchy such as exists in the West Indies. It is also true that the Westminster model may have devious consequences. Certainly there is empirical evidence to support such an argument. In Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, ethnic divisions have both been replicated and reinforced through the electoral process. Furthermore, in Jamaica the population does tend to be polarized between the two dominant parties. The inability of Cheddi Jagan in the late 1950s and 1960s to use the electoral system to transcend his ethnic base of support in Guyana and Michael Manley's failure to enlist the good will of the followers of the Jamaica Labour Party are supportive of the NJM's thesis. These are the cases that Coard must have had in mind when he argued that with the Westminster model,

whenever you try to mobilize people for national development, then any party involved in that process which forms the Government can only mobilize half the people with the other half being by definition completely opposed to it. Then when the opposition party wins the next election the other half that supports the losing party refuses to be mobilized. So with these kinds of violent divisions, you can't get a small parish or community united, let alone the people nationally.<sup>47</sup>

It is possible, however, to provide at least a partial rebuttal to the NJM's criticisms of the Westminster model. It is true, for example, that elections do not provide a sufficient mechanism for continuous involvement in decision-making. But at the same time, their use does provide individuals with a role in the outcome of some issues, such as, for example, the choice of their leaders. An electoral system clearly is not adequate to ensure a society of participation. But it is not accurate to argue that nowhere is an

election of more than trivial importance. Furthermore, it is not empirically true that elections always result in the reinforcement of the positions of the already privileged. The emergence of Eric Gairy in Grenada itself represents a counter-illustration to the NJM argument. Indeed, Patrick Emmanuel has pointed out that in the West Indies, the Westminster model had "allowed the rural black masses through the leadership of Bradshaw, Bird, Bramble, Joshua, Gairy to challenge the traditionally dominant power structure based on wealth and color."<sup>48</sup> It is at least plausible to argue that with respect to Jagan in Guyana and Manley in Jamaica, the intensification of conflict which occurred had as much to do with a struggle over increasingly scarce resources or the potential fruits of forthcoming independence as it did with the presumed centrifugal forces associated with the electoral process.

Whatever might be said about the Westminster model, the fact is, however, that some form of national elections constituted the only way to test the NJM's mandate to provide the society with leadership. Such a test, the party never permitted. Instead it simply assigned to itself a continuous leadership role. That role, furthermore, was anticipated to continue indefinitely. Speaking in the United States on June 5, 1983, with respect to the formulation of a new constitution, Prime Minister Bishop declared that it "is certainly going to institutionalize and entrench the system of popular democracy which we have been building over these past four years in our country." When Bishop referred to national elections, he was vague; his one reference to the subject reads, "apart from the usual national elections, which will of course be there too, we are going to ensure that these embryonic organs of popular democracy continue to have a place." Aside from his obvious endorsement of the mass organizations, it is not possible to know what the prime minister meant in his reference to national elections. Similarly, it is difficult to interpret what he meant when he said:

We don't believe in Grenada in presidents-for-life or elected people for life. We believe in service for life. And when you stop serving, you must be recalled and get out of the way for somebody else to serve.<sup>49</sup>

The government of Maurice Bishop was clearly hostile to the expression of points of view contrary to its own. Amburaley and Jamea, in an otherwise supportive article, describe that hostility as "the major defect of the regime." They cataloged the compo-

nents of this defect: dissent was treated in a "heavy-handed manner"; there was a "somewhat lax attitude toward the question of democratic rights . . . a de facto ban on political activities outside the control of the party"; and, finally, a "dangerous tendency to label as 'counter-revolutionary' anybody who expressed public and organized disagreement with the PRG."<sup>50</sup> To be sure, there were counter-revolutionary activities present in Grenada, and the government was continuously harassed and pressured by the United States. Nonetheless, it is clear that, independent of these political problems, the existence of a multiplicity of organized interests competing for political and policy space was not an element of the NJM's vision of Grenada's future. To the extent, however, that such space must be provided, whether or not a formal Westminster model is present, for a regime to be considered democratic, it is clear that the political structure in Grenada under the PRG left much to be desired.

### Assessment

There is a profound irony that in the name of a "New Democracy," a paternalistic political system was put in place in Grenada. It had not, after all, been that long ago that the paternalism of the plantation economy had been undermined. Furthermore, Gairy himself as a paternalistic figure still was in the forefront of Grenada's political history. To be sure, in this new setting the authority figure was a party, not a person. Furthermore, the terms of the paternalistic relationship had changed: this was a system of authority designed to modernize the society and in which the leadership genuinely sought to promote the material welfare of the population. Nonetheless, it is clear that in its fundamentals, the "new democracy" bore a striking resemblance to the patterns of authority of a previous era. The party, ultimately, expected to be obeyed. Its rule was not open to challenge. The ruling authority would listen to the people but would reserve to itself the right to adjudicate the conflicts and choose among alternative policy options.

Fundamental to the viability of a paternalistic system is the competence of the authority. In this case, the question centers on the NJM's ability to fill effectively the functions which it had defined for itself. For the responsibilities of the paternalistic agent are profound. Weaknesses or failures mean not merely

that programs and policies do not work. Those failures and missteps undermine the legitimacy of the authority in the eyes of subordinates. They also rob the ruling agent of the self-confidence essential to its continuation in the leadership role. Thus it is that in constructing a paternalistic system, the NJM had not only vested itself with power but also demanded of itself effective performance. Ultimately, as we shall see, it was that demand, difficult to satisfy but fundamental to the viability of the system which it had established, which proved to be the critical factor in the failure of the PRG. It is that issue which is addressed in the following chapter.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>"Extracts from Comrade Coard's Speech: Report on the National Economy for 1981 and the Prospects for 1982," in *To Construct From Morning: Making the People's Budget in Grenada* (St. George's, Grenada: Fedon Publishers, 1982), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Latin America Bureau, *Grenada: Whose Freedom* (London: Latin America [Research and Action] Ltd, 1984), p. 45.

<sup>3</sup>*Is Freedom We Making: The New Democracy in Grenada* (St. George's, Grenada: Fedon Publishers, 1980).

<sup>4</sup>Louis Lindsey, "Colonialism and the Myth of Resource Insufficiency in Jamaica," in Vaughan A. Lewis, ed., *Size, Self-Determination and International Relations: The Caribbean* (Kingston, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1976), p. 65.

<sup>5</sup>"1973 Manifesto of the New Jewel Movement," as reprinted in *Independence for Grenada — Myth or Reality?* Proceedings of a Conference on the Implications of Independence for Grenada, Sponsored by the Institute of International Relations and the Department of Government, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad, 11-13 January 1974, edited by the Conference Committee (Trinidad: Institute of International Relations, 1974), pp. 153-156.

<sup>6</sup>"1973 Manifesto," pp. 153-156.

<sup>7</sup>"1973 Manifesto," p. 153.

<sup>8</sup>"The People's Budget: An Interview with Cde. Bernard Coard," in *To Construct from Morning: Making the People's Budget in Grenada* (St. George's, Grenada: Fedon Publishers, 1982), p. 150.

<sup>9</sup>"We Will Not Submit or Bow to American Bullying," an interview with Selwyn Strachan, *Intercontinental Press*, November 19, 1979, p. 1123.

<sup>10</sup>W. Richard Jacobs and Ian Jacobs, *Grenada the Route to Revolution* (Ciudad de la Habana, Cuba: Casa de las Americas, 1980), p. 117.

<sup>11</sup>"We Will Not Submit . . .," p. 1122.

<sup>12</sup>Comrade Maurice Bishop, Prime Minister of the People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada, Interview Conducted on 11th May 1982, with Comrade



Rupert Lewis for *World Marxist Review*, Control Number FF, p. 1. (See Chapter 4, note 1, for a further discussion of this source.)

<sup>13</sup>V. Solodovnikov and V. Bogoslovsky, *Non-Capitalist Development: An Historical Outline* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), p. 102.

<sup>14</sup>"We Will Not Submit . . .," p. 1123.

<sup>15</sup>Maurice Bishop, "Opening Address," at the First International Conference in Solidarity with Grenada, November 1981, published in *Grenada is not Alone* (St. George's, Grenada: Fedon Publishers, 1982), p. 9.

<sup>16</sup>Maurice Bishop, "In Nobody's Backyard," a radio broadcast on April 13, 1979, in Bruce Marcus and Michael Taber, eds., *Maurice Bishop Speaks: The Grenada Revolution 1979-83* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1983), pp. 27-28, 30.

<sup>17</sup>Embassy of Grenada in the USSR, To: Comrade Maurice Bishop, From: Comrade Bernard Bourne, Control Number 109242, p. 2. (See Chapter 4, note 1; also notes 19-24.)

<sup>18</sup>Embassy of Grenada in the USSR, *Report from W. Richard Jacobs*, 11 July 1983, Control Number W, p. 8.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup>Embassy of Grenada in the USSR, *Relations with the CPSU*, Control Number 102329, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup>Embassy of Grenada in the USSR, *Report from W. Richard Jacobs*, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup>Embassy of Grenada in the USSR, *Relations with the CPSU*, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup>Embassy of Grenada in the USSR, *Report from W. Richard Jacobs*, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup>John W. Bennett, "Paternalism," in David Sills, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1968), Vol. II, p. 472.

<sup>25</sup>All these quotations are from "Address by Cde. Maurice Bishop to Bloody Sunday Rally," Seamoon, St. Andrew, November 21, 1982, as reprinted in *One Caribbean, Two Speeches by Maurice Bishop* (Surrey: Britain-Grenada Friendship Society, n. d.).

<sup>26</sup>*Is Freedom We Making*, p. 24.

<sup>27</sup>"1973 Manifesto," p. 156.

<sup>28</sup>*To Construct from Morning*, pp. 154-155.

<sup>29</sup>*Is Freedom We Making*, p. 43.

<sup>30</sup>*Is Freedom We Making*, p. 43.

<sup>31</sup>D. Sinclair DaBreo, *The Grenada Revolution* (Castries, St. Lucia: A.M.A.P.S. Publication, 1979), p. 127.

<sup>32</sup>DaBreo, pp. 168-169.

<sup>33</sup>Ricky Singh, "In Bishop's Grenada . . .," *Caribbean Contact*, December 1979, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup>Quoted in Michael Massing, "Grenada Before and After," in *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1984, p. 79.

<sup>35</sup>*To Construct from Morning*, p. 154.

<sup>36</sup>Fitzroy Ambursley and Winston James, "Maurice Bishop and Grenada's New Jewel Movement," in *New Left Review*, No. 142, November-December 1983, p. 93.

<sup>37</sup>Anthony P. Maingot, "Options for Grenada: The Need To Be Cautious," *Caribbean Review*, Vol. XII, No. 4 (Fall 1983), p. 27.

<sup>38</sup>EPICA Task Force, *Grenada the Peaceful Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: EPICA Task Force, 1982), p. 114.

<sup>39</sup>Fitzroy Ambursley, "Grenada: The New Jewel Revolution," in Fitzroy Ambursley and Robin Cohen, eds., *Crisis in the Caribbean* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), p. 211.

<sup>40</sup>*To Construct from Morning*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>41</sup>*To Construct from Morning*, p. 10.

<sup>42</sup>*To Construct from Morning*, pp. 37, 39-41, 42-44, 45, 48.

<sup>43</sup>*To Construct from Morning*, p. 44.

<sup>44</sup>DaBreo, p. 331.

<sup>45</sup>Ambursley, "Grenada: The New Jewel Revolution," p. 212.

<sup>46</sup>"Address by Cde. Maurice Bishop to Bloody Sunday Rally."

<sup>47</sup>"The People's Budget," p. 50.

<sup>48</sup>Patrick Emmanuel, "Independence and Viability: Elements of Analysis," in Vaughan A. Lewis, ed., *Size, Self-Determination and International Relations: The Caribbean* (Kingston, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1976), p. 7.

<sup>49</sup>*Maurice Bishop Speaks to U.S. Workers* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1983), p. 22.

<sup>50</sup>Ambursley and James, pp. 93-94.



## Chapter 4

# THE NEW JEWEL MOVEMENT UNDER STRESS

### *The Need for Renewal*

If Grenada had possessed a competitive political system, with other political parties granted the opportunity to vie for political power, it is clear that by July 1983, the New Jewel Movement would have been hard pressed to sustain its mandate to rule. That there had been an erosion in its political work and ability to call upon the good will and enthusiasm of the Grenadian people was no secret, despite the fact that no word of it appeared in the government-controlled media or in public discussions by the leaders of the party. Opposition parties could have pointed to the problems encountered by the NJM in support of the contention that it was time to replace its leadership. Evidence of the crisis in which the party found itself was supplied in internal Central Committee reports. In March 1983, the Central Committee reported, "the Party came dangerously close to losing its links with the masses." This same report went on to declare that "our propaganda machinery has been incredibly weak leading to the near collapse of our propaganda work . . . resulting in the over all mood of the masses being low." It was concerned that the militia had "decreased in quantity and size" throughout most of the country. Furthermore, it acknowledged economic problems which were never conceded publicly: "... we are experiencing extreme difficulties in mobilizing external finance and receiving already promised amounts. This had led to a serious cash flow problem which has slowed down and is even threatening to halt key capital investment projects, caused limited lay-offs and shaken the confidence of broad sections of the masses." Perhaps most damaging of all, the party conceded that its work in the mass organizations, the keystone of its "new democracy," also was unsatisfactory: "... our failure to

build the mass organizations, sports and culture and the organs of popular power has adversely affected the mood and disposition of the masses."<sup>2</sup>

It is not at all certain, however, that competing in an electoral arena would have been harmful to the NJM, or even that its defeat was inevitable. In the first place, much of the political opposition the party would have faced still might have been discredited by its association with Eric Gairy. In addition, it is not clear that other, non-Gairyite, political parties, such as the Grenada National Party, were sufficiently attractive to command at least a plurality at the polls.

Beyond the question of victory, however, the existence of an electoral process might have proved beneficial to the internal renewal process which the party so badly needed. Time and again in the debates within the Central Committee, the difficulty of communications within the party was described. Thus in the report which the Central Committee issued as a result of a mid-July meeting, concern was raised that comrades are "afraid of raising any criticism" and that the "lack of inner party democracy has . . . led to the lowering of the prestige and credibility of the Central Committee in the eyes of the membership."<sup>3</sup> If the NJM had been required to compete in an electoral process, this lack of debate and dialogue within the ranks of the party would have come to an end. Public discussion of politics generally would have prompted a more open discussion of politics within the party. This, in turn, might have allowed the party to reinvigorate itself and reestablish the elan which it had possessed during its days in opposition and in the initial period of its rule.

But the use of the electoral process to rejuvenate the NJM was precluded by the party's own politics. In this regard, the stance of the NJM was the same as that of other vanguard parties in settings of paternalistic socialism. The members of the party believed that the Grenada Revolution was entirely dependent on the continuation of NJM rule: to put the leadership of the party at risk was to jeopardize the revolution. The untitled report issued in mid-September articulated this clearly when it said, "we all know, Comrades, we say it every day, the party leads the revolution, what then can the disintegration of the party mean? It can only mean one thing: The collapse and overthrow of the revolution will shortly follow the disintegration of the party." Given this attitude, it is not surprising that the party did not

allow the creation of an electoral process. In its view, to do so would have been to betray the revolution.

In the absence of an electoral mechanism of renewal, the leadership of the party was left alone to struggle to reverse the tide. The difficulties it faced in doing so were numerous. The New Jewel Movement was never a mass, or even a very large, party. The party itself never divulged the size of its membership; however, supporters overseas placed it at between 300 and 400 members (including "candidate" or non-voting members) or roughly 0.3 percent and 0.4 percent of the Grenada population. Relative to the population, this is only about one-half the number of members in the ruling party in Cuba and one-tenth the number in China. Full-time members were estimated at only about 65 percent by Tony Martin and Dessima Williams, the latter herself a member of the party.<sup>6</sup> The NJM's low ratio of party members to the population is significant since in paternalistic socialism, the burdens borne by party members are arduous. Not only must their behavior be exemplary, but in addition it is the party cadres who do the organizing efforts essential to this model of governance. They are the ones who see to it that the mass organizations function, that the organs of the new democracy remain viable, that people attend national and regional rallies and political meetings, that volunteers join the militia, and that institutions such as trade unions support the government. But as we have seen in each of these areas of work, deterioration had set in so that by the end, none of them was functioning effectively. In short, the burdens which had been placed on the shoulders of the party members became insupportable. There simply were not enough motivated and qualified party members to provide the leadership the model of governance adopted in Grenada demanded.

Graphic evidence in this regard is provided by Trevor Munroe, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Jamaica, a party which considered itself an ally of the NJM. Munroe reports that by the end of August 1983, the National Women's Organization in Grenada was in a serious state of decline and the NJM had undertaken an assessment of the reason. The party sent questionnaires to 25 women who were party members. According to Munroe, "what it found was that of the 25, 17 were experiencing major health problems as a result of the extraordinary workload which the Party was piling down on them . . ." The question-

naire found that these women "had no night in the week at all when they were not required to do political work" and, as a result, "almost every single one of them was breaking down and could not carry out the work which they were being asked to do." This affected not only party members but the general population as well; seeing what was happening to party members, they said to themselves, according to Munroe,

This Party is not for me because it looked like if you become a member of the New Jewel Movement, despite how much consciousness you have, you can't have no children because you don't have the time to look after them; you can't lead a normal life because you're going to break down with health problems and other difficulties.

As a result, concluded Munroe, "The Party's prestige was therefore falling amongst the people, particularly the working class women in the communities." The experience of the National Women's Organization was not unique. The debates in the Central Committee frequently refer to overwork and it is clear that breakdowns were a general phenomenon of party life by mid-1983.<sup>6</sup>

The reasons for that failure center on the fact that the paternalism essayed by the NJM required human resources far beyond those available to the party. The NJM was not able to implement its Leninist politics because it lacked the party personnel and cadres essential to that task. In this regard, the NJM was analogous to Cuba's 26th of July Movement at the moment of that group's triumph in guerilla warfare in 1959. Fidel Castro's movement "lacked political competence and administrative skills" and in coming to power had not "set up the rank and file or administrative machine needed for running the increasingly important state sector of the economy." But in Cuba, unlike Grenada, the national leadership was able to turn to the Cuban Communist Party and its "keen sense of organization and discipline" to help administer the society.<sup>7</sup> No such political back-up was available to the NJM. What lay behind this difference was the fact that in Cuba there had been a long history of radical political thought and organizing. The Communist Party possessed roots, especially in urban areas, and was an authentic part of the political dialogue. Thus when the 26th of July Movement needed help, there was an alternative radical organization to which it could turn. No such option was available to the NJM in Grenada. There the presence of colonialism had thwarted the

development of an indigenous political culture until very late in the day. If the NJM had looked to find organizational assistance, it would have found a political counterpart to economic underdevelopment: a genuine shortage of the kind of people who, identifying with the goals of the revolution, possessed the administrative skills necessary to manage the society successfully. To some extent, this scarcity was alleviated by immigration from other nations in the region. But at no time was the NJM able to compensate for the lack of politically-motivated and competent cadres in the country.

Under stress, paternalism can turn quite ugly. On one hand, the paternalistic authority may become hostile if the followers demonstrate a reluctance to fill a subordinate role. Benevolent paternalism is no less authoritarian for being benevolent in its intentions. If appropriately deferential behavior is not forthcoming, the dominant party, feeling challenged, may be quick to strike at real or imagined usurpers. On the other hand, a paternalistic party might also be prone to turn on itself in a time of crisis. Convinced of its own permanent claim to rule, such a party is ill-equipped to deal with political defeats. When confronted with setbacks, therefore, it might initiate a search for internal traitors and saboteurs, in its effort to explain its own shortcomings.

With the passage of time, the NJM manifested both of these symptoms of stress. As early as June 1981, Prime Minister Bishop, in one of his most illiberal addresses, gave vent to the intolerance which can be present when the paternalistic authority feels threatened. In the context of his denouncing efforts to establish an independent newspaper on the island, Bishop declared:

When the revolution speaks, it must be heard, listened to. Whatever the revolution decrees, it must be obeyed; when the revolution commands, it must be carried out; when the revolution talks, no parasite must bark in their corner. The voice of the masses must be listened to, their rules must be obeyed, their ideas must receive priority, their needs must be addressed; when the masses speak, they must be heard. When the revolution orders, it must be obeyed. The revolution must be respected.<sup>8</sup>

This is a very harsh statement, the hard edge of which derives from the fact that the unity which the PRG so valued simply was not present in the country. In this speech, Bishop succumbed to

the temptation to declare opposing viewpoints as anti-revolutionary, rather than considering differences as normal and inevitable occurrences in the emergence of a developing society.

But even more profoundly, the members of the party turned against each other as the NJM's weaknesses became increasingly manifest. Repeatedly the party called for more discipline and better work to solve its difficulties, a response which tended only to compound the difficulties of the already overworked party cadres. As early as April 1981, the Central Committee expressed concern about the need to create a "tight chairmanship, high standards of discipline" and a "self-critical approach by all committees." Similar issues were addressed in September 1981, in December 1981, and again in April 1982. In June 1982, the Organizing Committee, a subcommittee of the Central Committee, reported that "there was a collapse of nearly all areas of party work" involving workers, youth, women, and the state. Once again, in July 1982, the same kinds of problems were noted, this time with the observation that "a Party School was required for Party members to master the science of Marxism-Leninism."<sup>9</sup>

### *Search for Solutions*

The search for solutions within the party took a new turn in October 1982, when Bernard Coard, the deputy prime minister, resigned from the party's Central Committee. In doing so, he blamed Maurice Bishop for the party's problems. Though no public discussion of the resignation was permitted, the Central Committee itself held four sessions totalling 32 hours to discuss the crisis caused by the resignation. Coard himself did not attend these meetings. But Selwyn Strachan interviewed him and reported his views. Coard saw Bishop's leadership as the source of the party's difficulties. Strachan reported Coard as saying that "in order to take corrective action it would result in personality clashes with the Chairman of the Central Committee," namely Bishop. Coard believed that what the party needed was the introduction of Leninist measures, in pursuit of which the party needed to "Change Chairmanship of the Central Committee."<sup>10</sup>

The members of the Central Committee were not prepared in October 1982 to remove Bishop from the chair. Indeed, in an

internal self-evaluation carried out at that meeting, Bishop's performance was ranked second only to that of Strachan. Ranked on a scale of one to five, Bishop was the only member of the committee to receive a five under the heading "relations with the masses." His low scores of 2.5 and 3, respectively, were for "discipline" and "ideological level."<sup>11</sup> This may have represented a partial validation of Coard's critique of the leader's performance, but it is clear that at this date the deputy prime minister had not convinced his colleagues that Bishop's performance was so inadequate that he had to be removed.

The crisis confronting the party continued, however, and resulted in yet another plenary meeting in July 1983. Again a comprehensive review of party work was undertaken. Thirteen separate areas of state and party work were reviewed and serious problems were found in at least ten of them. Furthermore, some of these sectors were considered critical to the Party's success, such as propaganda work, which was deemed to be in "a state of deep crisis"; women's work, which was described as "weak and stagnant"; and youth work, labeled "poor." But in none of these areas were recommended measures adequate to reverse the decline which was underway. Thus in the propaganda area, the organizational changes which were advised did not address the fact that the personnel working in this area were both insufficient in numbers and inadequately trained. Similarly, in the area of women's affairs, the Central Committee criticized the "petty bourgeois trends" which were present but had little to offer to reverse that tendency. Finally, in the area of youth work, the recommendations fell far short of what would have been needed to correct "the general absence of resolution which was present in this area."<sup>12</sup>

Thus it was that the July plenary resolved nothing. It resolved nothing because to do otherwise would have required the Party's confronting the entire basis upon which it had established its rule. Such a possibility was never considered. It is in this sense that those who argue, like Don Rojas, that there never was an ideological split between Maurice Bishop and Bernard Coard are right.<sup>13</sup> At no time in the Central Committee debates did anyone suggest that there was a need for a rethinking of the model of leadership provided by the party.

Nonetheless, the July plenary became the focus of considerable debate during the next three months precisely on the

grounds that it had not provided direction for the party. On August 25, the Central Committee met again with one topic on its agenda: "concern of party membership." At that meeting, Central Committee member Leon Cornwall reported that feedback from party members had been negative concerning the July plenary. He reported that members felt that the Central Committee had been insufficiently self-critical and that its members still were not functioning properly. Furthermore, Cornwall reinforced this critique by reporting that observers from the German Democratic Republic and Cuba had also commented unfavorably on the work of the NJM. Following Cornwall's presentation, other Central Committee members — Ian St. Bernard, Tan Bartholomew, Liam James, and Selwyn Strachan — made similar reports. Concern was expressed with regard to the leadership provided by the Central Committee and the functioning of the militia, youth organizations, and problems in the regional distribution of party personnel. James and Strachan were particularly dire in their warnings. James declared that "we are seeing the beginning of the disintegration of the party," while Strachan warned that "sections of the party have begun to rebel against the higher organs of the party." Only Unison Whiteman and Fitzroy Bain argued that things might not be as bad as they had been portrayed. Whiteman suggested that there was a need for a round of general meetings of party members to "assess how wide is the discontent," and Bain agreed. But Bartholomew responded that the party could not wait for this process to be carried out and that it had "to urgently address the question," suggesting that general meetings could follow the Central Committee deliberations.<sup>14</sup>

Bishop seems not to have participated in the debates that at least implicitly were concerned with the quality of the leadership which he brought to the Central Committee. He did, however, offer summary remarks after the Central Committee had agreed to yet another extraordinary meeting to be scheduled in mid-September. In these remarks, he generally agreed with the crisis view of the state of the party. In addition, he made two other remarks which are of significance in light of subsequent developments. First, he provided an indication that he was aware that an organized faction was working within the party to undermine his position. He shared with the other members of the Central Committee his "concern that many key decisions of

the party, if not the majority, have been made informally outside of higher organs." Second, he conceded nothing to his opponents with regard to commitment to Marxist ideology. Thus he suggested that members of the Central Committee, in attempting to reverse the deterioration of the NJM should "study the history of the CPSU" and "should reread Standards of Party Life by Pro-nin," a Soviet ideologist.<sup>15</sup> It seems clear especially that with these last suggestions, Bishop was defending himself against the possible charge that he was tending to social democracy or possessed a petty-bourgeois attitude, recurrent themes used within the NJM when attempting to explain the problems encountered by the party.

### *Joint Leadership*

The elaborate agenda which Bishop had drawn up for Central Committee meeting, which extended from the 14th to the 17th of September, was immediately rejected. Instead the Committee worked with an agenda which contained only three subjects. First, it was to do an analysis of the present state of the party and the Revolution; second, a collective and individual analysis of the Central Committee; and third, the role of the Central Committee in general.<sup>16</sup> Once again, however, it is clear that while formally the Committee addressed the Central Committee and its problems, in fact it was undertaking an assessment of the leadership provided by Bishop. Thus the bulk of the meeting was concerned with a negative assessment of that leadership, an assessment which it was agreed provided an explanation of the general crisis which the NJM faced.

Ewart Layne initiated the debate. According to him, the revolution was facing "the greatest danger since 1979." He continued, "there is great dispiritiveness and dissatisfaction among the people . . . the state of the party at present is the lowest it had ever been." Layne listed all of the tasks which confronted the party, ranging from running the economy to raising the consciousness of the working class. But, argued Layne, "in the face of all these tasks the party is crumbling, all mass organizations are to the ground, organs of people's democracy is about to collapse. The internal state of the party is very dread" and its "prestige has fallen in the eyes of the party members and the masses." Layne singled out the Central Committee for criticism, declar-

ing that it was "on a path of right opportunism and is very dishonest to its members . . ."<sup>17</sup>

One speaker after another following Layne's presentation reiterated this point of view. But it was only when the meeting turned to the second item on the agenda, Collective and Individual Analysis of the Central Committee, that Bishop's opponents made their attack on him explicit. In initiating discussion of this item, Liam James argued that "the most fundamental problem is the quality of leadership of the Central Committee and the party provided by Comrade Maurice Bishop." James acknowledged Bishop's "ability to inspire and develop Comrades, his ability to raise the regional and international respect for the party and revolution; he has the charisma to build the confidence of the people both in and out of the country and to put forward clearly the positions of the Party." But, argued James, these strengths were not what the party needed at the moment. James declared that the qualities Bishop lacked were what the Grenada revolution required. These deficiencies James enumerated:

- (1) A Leninist level of organization and discipline.
- (2) Great depth in ideological clarity.
- (3) Brilliance in strategy and tactics.

Declared James, "these qualities which are essential for Marxist-Leninist leadership has proved to be lacking in the Comrade at this time."<sup>18</sup>

Following James' presentation, other members — including Ewart Layne, John Ventour, Leon Cornwall, Chris DeRiggs, Tan Bartholomew, Kamou McBarnette, Phyllis Coard, and Selwyn Strachan — all developed similar themes concerning the quality of leadership provided by Bishop. Even Bishop's supporters acknowledged deficiencies. George Louison admitted that Bishop "loses focus and spends too much time on details." But he was also careful to argue that some of the responsibility for this shortcoming should be shared by the Central Committee as a whole, "since it has 'not been able to assist the Comrade in developing these strengths.'" Unison Whiteman took a similar line, agreeing that many of the criticisms were correct but also asserting that "we have to be careful that we don't shift too much blame from the Central Committee collectively."<sup>19</sup>

Clearly these attacks troubled Bishop. In response, he said he "agreed that the Committee Comrades have not raised these

points before with him frankly." He now "picked up an overwhelming sentiment" that he did not possess the required qualities and thus he conceded that he had not "given adequate leadership" to the Central Committee. He concluded his response by saying that he needed "time to think" of his own role and "to give a more precise response to the problem . . ."<sup>20</sup>

It was when the meeting finally turned to the last item on the agenda, the Role of the Central Committee, that proposed solutions to the crisis were delineated. Bishop himself initiated this discussion by reminding the group that it had attempted to address these problems many times in the past. This time he proposed that the Central Committee meet monthly instead of quarterly, with each of the monthly meetings to examine a specific area of party or state work. In addition, Bishop proposed that the Central Committee hold wholistic plenaries similar to the current one three times a year. Bishop furthermore exhorted the leadership "to develop and maintain links with the masses" by stepping up participation in zonal and parish councils, visits to schools, and the monitoring and encouraging of production.<sup>21</sup>

To this rather mild program of reform, Liam James proposed an alternative which had been prepared by Bishop's opponents on the Central Committee. James proposed a "model of joint leadership, marrying the strengths of Comrades Bishop and Coard." Under this arrangement, the responsibilities of each were:

- Bishop: (1) Direct work among the masses, focusing on production and propaganda;  
 (2) Particular attention to the organs of popular democracy, working class, youth masses, visits to urban and rural work places;  
 (3) Militia mobilization;  
 (4) Regional and international work;  
 Coard: (1) Party organization work, Chairman of the Organizing Committees;  
 (2) Party organizational development and formation of comrades;  
 (3) Strategy and tactics.

In the scheme, the Central Committee would meet monthly and continue to be chaired by Bishop, but the Political Bureau would

be headed by Coard, replacing the prime minister in that function.<sup>22</sup>

Later and in retrospect, Bishop's supporters recognized that in this proposal a real transfer of power was implicit. Bishop's functions were to be reduced to representative and symbolic roles. Only with regard to working with the militia was Bishop assigned a responsibility which seemed to contain real substance. However, even in this case it is not clear that "militia mobilization" meant actually leading the group of volunteers. An equally plausible interpretation would be that he was to act as recruiter, a function consistent with the essentially propagandistic role which otherwise had been assigned to him.

In the meantime, Coard was assigned the strategic, organizational, and personnel tasks associated with the substance of real power. However, at the time, the proposal came as a surprise to the pro-Bishop minority on the Central Committee. As a result, Bishop's allies were forced to make a hurried analysis of the proposal and did not engage the problem of the radical diminution in Bishop's authority which the joint leadership idea implied. Their opposition to the idea, therefore, was weak. Fitzroy Bain thus complained that "he is confused on how this will work and he would like it to be spelled out clearly," after which "he will need to give this more thought." George Louison said that his opposition to the proposal was based on the fact that "this model cannot solve the problem of Comrade Maurice Bishop," by which he seemed to mean that it does not help the latter to overcome his deficiencies while retaining his dominance in the party. Whiteman opposed the plan on the grounds that nothing so radical was required and that all that was needed was the assigning of specific tasks to Coard as deputy leader, with Bishop retaining his top position. Especially in Whiteman's and Louison's statements, there seems to be recognition that "joint leadership" did not in fact mean equality between the two leaders, but they did not fully articulate and debate this underlying issue.<sup>23</sup>

Ewart Layne's defense of joint leadership did, however, make the point. He complained that as yet "we do not have a Marxist-Leninist party or a Leninist Central Committee." This inability to work out its political line occurred, according to Layne, "because of the absence of Comrade Coard." This weakness had not existed in the past when Coard "lead in ideology, organiza-

tion and strategy and tactics for years." Thus the need now to turn to Coard stemmed from the fact that while Bishop "is the best person to inspire the masses on the line of the party," the formulation of that line itself depended on Coard.<sup>24</sup>

Bishop himself took a generally negative position in regard to the proposal. He reported that he had never had a problem in sharing power, nor did he have difficulty working with Bernard Coard. Indeed, he "referred to 1977 when Comrade Bernard was accused for aggressiveness and working to grasp power, he had defended him." However, in this case, "he need to get some answers on the operationalization." Furthermore, there was a question of "how we will articulate this to the party and masses," a reference to the need to protect the party's image with regard to the question of leadership and rumors concerning a power struggle and the imminent collapse of the revolution. Bishop indicated that the criticism he had received provided "a clear note of no confidence." On that basis, he questioned the viability of the proposal since "he cannot inspire the masses when he have to look over his back or feel that he does not have the full confidence of the Comrades."<sup>25</sup>

Bishop completed his presentation with a plea that Coard should be called in to discuss the proposal before it was adopted. Coard's supporters seem to have seen this as a delaying tactic designed to dilute the proposal, for at this point, the discussion became very heated. Though no vote was recorded, the minutes report that in response to that idea "Comrades felt, however, that the Central Committee should conclude on the decision before Comrade Bernard is spoken to," but that "Comrade Louison continued to raise his concern in that how will the joint leadership develop the four points in Comrade Bishop." Over and over again, Louison expressed his doubts on the viability of the proposal and, as a result, increasingly the debate took the form of a personal attack on him. Louison was criticized for the "context and spirit" in which he made his contribution. "Disappointment" in him was expressed, and Layne complained about his "childish attitude." Finally, as recorded in the minutes, Louison erupted:

He has the right to put forward his position no one can accuse him of opportunism in his struggle over the years in the party. He raise his points seeking clarity in a genuine way. He regarded Layne's comments as "shit."<sup>26</sup>

Finally, the Central Committee moved to a series of formal votes. The joint leadership proposal itself was passed by a vote of 9-2, with two abstentions, while a subsequent vote on the "Formalization of Joint Leadership" passed 9-1, with three abstentions. The Central Committee agreed to inform the members of the party on the change in the leadership in a series of meetings, but the vote was 9-3 against "informing the masses." Thus the NJM had agreed to a drastic change in its leadership but decided not to inform the public about that change.<sup>27</sup>

It is possible to infer who voted in opposition to the Coard-backed proposal. Hudson Austin did not participate in the voting, resulting in the fact that even though fourteen members of the Central Committee were present, only thirteen votes were recorded. Furthermore, Bishop abstained.<sup>28</sup> George Louison himself has indicated that he was the sole person voting against the joint leadership proposal.<sup>29</sup> Louison must, in this statement, be referring to the 9-1-3 "formalization" vote. From the context of the debate, it seems clear that either Fitzroy Bain or Unison Whiteman must have joined Louison in the opposition on the first 9-2-2 vote, while the other was recorded as an abstention.

### *Fragmentation*

It was the controversy surrounding the proposal for joint leadership which ultimately was the occasion for the fragmentation of the party, the demise of the Grenada Revolution, and the American military intervention. Yet on its face, the proposal first advanced by Liam James had a certain plausibility. To marry the strengths of Bishop and Coard does not seem unreasonable. Indeed, Bishop himself accepted it, at least for a brief period of time. During the General Meeting of the NJM held on September 25, 1983, Bishop announced his agreement to the joint leadership proposal, though upon his subsequent return from a trip to Central Europe and Cuba, he reversed his position.<sup>30</sup>

Central to the position of the advocates of joint leadership was a concern with the seriousness of the crisis which faced the NJM. Coard himself at the Central Committee indicated that "his feelings of the present situation are that within six months the party will disintegrate totally unless a fundamental package of measures are done." He reported that "the party have never



had such weak links . . . with the masses. The image of the party has deteriorated in the eyes of the masses." Furthermore, he declared, "the mood of the party Comrades is at the lowest it has ever been," citing in this regard the "number of Comrades sick."<sup>31</sup>

The report issued by the Central Committee after the September 14-17 meeting, written by representatives of the pro-Coard majority, portrayed the state of the Revolution in, if anything, even bleaker terms. It reported that "the mood of the masses is characterized at worst by open dissatisfaction and cynicism and at best by serious demoralization." Overall the mood is 1-2 on a scale of 5 . . . . At present, the revolution is facing its worst crisis ever and most serious danger in 4 1/2 years."<sup>32</sup>

Central to this deterioration was Bishop himself. Coard declared that the "Comrade Leader found himself vacillating between the Marxist Leninist trend and the petit bourgeois trend." But while he had been on the Central Committee, Coard said he had been reluctant to raise the problem of Bishop's leadership because it would appear that he was challenging for the leadership of the party. Coard asserted, however, that if he had been "an ordinary member he would have manners [disciplined] the Comrade Leader years ago." The Central Committee Report was as clear as possible: "The main problem in the Central Committee for some time now has been the quality of the leadership of the Party and Central Committee provided by Comrade Maurice Bishop." Repeating James' earlier formulation concerning Bishop's weaknesses, the document reported that Bishop lacked the ability to lead the Party forward "in this most difficult time and to transform the Party into a Leninist one." It was for that reason that Bishop should share leadership with Coard for "when we take an honest look up and down the party, the only Comrade with precisely these strengths is Comrade Bernard Coard."<sup>33</sup>

It is not possible to reconstruct fully from official NJM documents the position of those who defended Bishop and his leadership. The pro-Bishop individuals within the Central Committee had been caught by surprise when the joint leadership proposal was offered. As a result, they had not made effective presentations of their case. However, in the aftermath of the overthrow of the PRG, both George Louison, Bishop's strongest defender on the Central Committee, and Don Rojas, Bishop's press secretary,

have given interviews which clarify the position of those who sided with the prime minister.

Like the anti-Bishop forces, Rojas traces the crisis to July 1982 when Coard resigned from the Central Committee. But unlike the story told by Coard and his followers, Rojas accuses the anti-Bishop group of factional activity between that date and September 1983. He points to the Organization of Revolutionary Education and Liberation (OREL), as the key to the problem. OREL had been part of the original merger of organizations which resulted in the formulation of the New Jewel Movement and had been Coard's original institutional base. Rojas argues that with his resignation from the Central Committee, "Bernard saw the opportunity to consolidate his influence and his authority within the party to advance the OREL people within the Central Committee to very influential positions. Three of them were elevated to the Political Bureau." He continues:

In respect I think that Bernard very clearly used that period to use his prestige and influence within the party to develop and line up forces behind him. He did this in a very systematic way. So when he decided to make his move for leadership of the party, he had already consolidated quite a power base within the Central Committee and within the full membership of the party.<sup>34</sup>

On this interpretation, the overwhelmingly anti-Bishop votes on the Central Committee were a reflection of the success Coard had experienced in this prior factional activity.

Neither Rojas nor Louison believes that the proposal for joint leadership was anything but a cover for a Coard takeover of leadership. Louison recalls that in the debates in the Central Committee, he had opposed it on the grounds that it "couldn't work. Theoretically it was wrong; it was immature; practically it could not be operationalized . . . . What I saw was an ultraleft mistake, voluntarist; it did not consider the stage of things and did not consider the masses and the people. It was a half-baked idea."<sup>35</sup> Rojas reports that Bishop, when he finally came to oppose the proposal, went even further. According to Rojas, Bishop "felt, quite frankly, that the way it had been proposed would have effectively removed him from influence in the top decision-making organs in the party." Rojas himself concurs:

In my view, if the proposal had been implemented as originally outlined, it would not have meant sharing power or equal distribution



of power between the two. It would, in fact, have meant that Bernard would have become the *de facto* leader of the party.

Even though Bishop would have retained the title of prime minister, "the real power in the country would be transferred from Bishop to Coard."<sup>36</sup>

It is probable that with regard to the question of prior political maneuvers by Coard and the power-shifting implications of the joint leadership proposal, Rojas' analysis is correct. It seems entirely likely that in his dissatisfaction with the leadership provided by Bishop, Coard did move to strengthen his political base within the Central Committee. At the same time, it certainly is true that in the division of labor suggested in the joint leadership proposal largely ceremonial posts were assigned to Bishop, while more substantive tasks were given to Coard. In that sense, the proposal probably was a means for Coard to take over the political leadership of the party.

But to say that is not necessarily to take sides with Bishop against Coard. For in making his case, Rojas does not deal with the political concerns of the Coard group. The latter's argument was that the party and the revolution had been brought to a point of crisis because of Bishop's inadequate leadership. Thus, they plausibly could argue that the joint leadership and the diminution in Bishop's authority which it implied, as well as the behind-the-scenes jockeying they had engaged in, were all essential to arrest the decline for which the prime minister had been responsible. To be sure, the Coard group had not been explicit on either their tactics or aims. However, it could hardly be expected that openness in dissent within the ruling party could be expected, given the negative attitude of that party to disagreements generally in the society.

In fact, Rojas denies that the crisis in the Grenada Revolution was as severe as had been portrayed in the Central Committee. The most he concedes is that there were "contradictions" in the party, but those were "secondary contradictions which could have been settled peacefully." No sign of the crisis which dominated the discussions by both pro- and anti-Bishop Central Committee members is present in Rojas' view. He simply affirms that "in my view the pace of the revolutionary process was the correct one."<sup>37</sup>

Ultimately then, the Bishop followers such as Rojas see their opponents within the party as people supporting the personal

power hunger of Bernard Coard. Rojas declares: "I think Leninism was being used as a cover . . . the call for a more Leninist orientation was misused to cover up what was in its essence a bid for power." Another Bishop supporter, Kenrick Radix, puts it even more bluntly: "Coard was power hungry and used his position as finance minister to undermine Maurice . . . Coard is 95 percent genius and 5 percent insane. And the 5 percent took over."<sup>38</sup>

### *Assessment*

There is a grave weakness in the Rojas position. It denies the profundity of the problem which the party faced. The assertion that there was a crisis in the party and in the Grenada Revolution was not made uniquely by Bernard Coard or his followers on the Central Committee. A similar view was held by George Louison and Unison Whiteman and even by Bishop himself. There was a reality to the crisis which the party faced, and the division within it reflected contrasting responses to that problem. It is difficult now for Bishop supporters to affirm what was conceded in September and October 1983, if not earlier. For if they were to do so, they would provide at least partial validation for the challenge which the Coard group raised to Bishop's leadership. That they are, understandably, reluctant to do. And yet it seems clear that even if Bishop had continued to lead the party, in substance as well as name, it would have been required to adopt major policy and organizational changes in order to try to escape the straits in which it found itself.

More important than who led the party is the question of what kind of changes in its organization and method of rule were required of the NJM. In this connection, it is hard to believe that the changes envisioned by Coard and his followers were the ones which the situation called for. In the first place, it was true, as the Bishop followers complained, that the Coard group never made clear what it meant by putting the party on a more Leninist path. Presumably, however, it meant introducing a greater degree of discipline in the work performance of party cadres while strengthening the leadership of Coard. But such changes failed to confront the structural problems which the party faced. It was a grossly understaffed party, given the fact that it still saw itself in a vanguard role. Furthermore, it functioned in a society which

it described as petty bourgeois and which tended to resist at least some of the structural changes envisioned by the party. The party's aim at expanding the state sector in agriculture was not the policy of choice of Grenada's peasantry<sup>39</sup> while the paternalism implicit in the institutions of the "new democracy" meant that the mass organization and regional and zonal councils increasingly were treated with indifference by the population.

Seen in this light, the call to put the NJM on a more Leninist footing, if implemented, might actually have worsened the crisis. It called for a continuation of the vanguard role, a role which in the Grenadian context and given the resources at its command, the party was not well-equipped to handle. It was this gap between its aims and its capabilities which had gotten the party into trouble in the first place. The Coard reforms promised, if anything, to worsen that shortfall. It is in this sense that Coard and his followers missed the point of the crisis as profoundly as the Bishop group. The supporters of joint leadership believed that "the New Jewel Movement needed to urgently pull up its socks and apply the principles of the revolutionary party in a more scientific way."<sup>40</sup> That is, they believed that all that was necessary was for party members to work better. This view does not consider the possibility that lack of hard work was not the NJM's problem, but that the party had committed itself to a political project — the introduction of paternalistic socialism — which was beyond its competence. But for party members to have considered that would have required them to reconsider the entire basis of their politics, something which, clearly, they were not prepared to do.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>This chapter relies heavily upon papers and documents discovered by U.S. Troops in Grenada which were subsequently released by the U.S. Department of State. In the citation of these papers, reference is made to the title of the document as well as the log number assigned to it. Quotations are reproduced as they appear on these documents except that spelling errors will be corrected. In addition, when abbreviations appear, full names will be used in this text. Thus when "C.C." is used in the original document, "Central Committee" appears here. *Central Committee Report on First Plenary Session*, 13-19 July 1983, Control Number 100243, pp. 1, 2, 4.

<sup>2</sup>*Central Committee Report*, pp. 14-16.

<sup>3</sup>*Central Committee Report*, pp. 3-4, 6.

<sup>4</sup>Untitled Report on Meeting of Central Committee, September 14-17, 1983, dated in handwriting 20/9/83, Control Number 000188, pp. 8-9.

<sup>5</sup>*Friends for Jamaica Newsletter*, 11/83, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 2. However, at the General Meeting of the New Jewel Movement on September 25, 1983, only 52 votes were recorded. The minutes of this meeting were reproduced in *Caribbean Review*, Vol. XII, No. 4, p. 53. In about 1970, the Cuban Communist Party had a membership of 78,000 in a population of about 10,000,000. The Chinese Communist Party comprises about 38,000,000 in a population of one billion. For Cuba, see K. S. Karol, *Guerillas in Power* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970), p. 458, n. 61; for China, see Fox Butterfield, *China Alive in the Bitter Sea* (New York: Times Books, 1983), p. 7. Tony Martin (ed.) with the assistance of Dessima Williams, *In Nobody's Back Yard: The Grenada Revolution in Its Own Words*, Vol. 1, The Revolution at Home (Dover, Mass.: The Majority Press, 1983), p. 57.

<sup>6</sup>Trevor Munroe, *Grenada: Revolution, Counter Revolution* (Jamaica: Vanguard Publishers Ltd., 1983), pp. 78-80; *Extraordinary Meeting of the Central Committee NJM 14-16 September 1983*, Control Number 00123, pp. 20, 28.

<sup>7</sup>K. S. Karol, p. 185.

<sup>8</sup>Maurice Bishop Speaks, *The Grenada Revolution 1979-1983*, ed. Bruce Marcus and Michael Taber (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1983), p. 164.

<sup>9</sup>*Minutes of the Central Committee of NJM*, Tuesday, October 12-Friday, October 15, 1982, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>10</sup>*Minutes*, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup>*Minutes*, p. 4, and calculated from data on p. 5.

<sup>12</sup>*Central Committee Report*, pp. 14-16.

<sup>13</sup>"Behind the Revolution's Overthrow," Interview with New Jewel Leader Don Rojas by Steve Wattenmaker, *Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 21, No. 25 (December 25, 1983), p. 758.

<sup>14</sup>*Minutes of Emergency Meeting of NJM Central Committee*, dated 26 August 1983, Control Number 100319, pp. 1-5.

<sup>15</sup>*Minutes of Emergency Meeting*, p. 6. The actual citation referred to is I. Pronin and M. Stepechev, *Leninist Standards of Party Life*, translated from the Russian, J. Langstone, ed. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969).

<sup>16</sup>*Extraordinary Meeting*, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup>*Extraordinary Meeting*, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup>*Extraordinary Meeting*, p. 14.

<sup>19</sup>*Extraordinary Meeting*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>20</sup>*Extraordinary Meeting*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>21</sup>*Extraordinary Meeting*, p. 19.

<sup>22</sup>*Extraordinary Meeting*, p. 22.

<sup>23</sup>*Extraordinary Meeting*, pp. 23-25.

<sup>24</sup>*Extraordinary Meeting*, p. 28.

<sup>25</sup>*Extraordinary Meeting*, p. 29.

<sup>26</sup>*Extraordinary Meeting*, pp. 29-33.

<sup>27</sup>*Extraordinary Meeting*, p. 34.

<sup>28</sup>*Extraordinary Meeting*, pp. 34, 40.

<sup>29</sup>"Interviewing George Louison, A PRG Minister Talks about the Killings," *Caribbean Review*, Vol. XII, No. 4, p. 17.

<sup>30</sup>"Minutes of the General Meeting of Full Members of the NJM held on Sunday, September 25, 1983," *Caribbean Review*, p. 58.

<sup>31</sup>*Extraordinary Meeting*, p. 43.

<sup>32</sup>Untitled Report, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup>Untitled Report, pp. 8-9.

<sup>34</sup>"Behind the Revolution's Overthrow," p. 757.

<sup>35</sup>"Interviewing George Louison," p. 17.

<sup>36</sup>"Behind the Revolution's Overthrow," pp. 757-758.

<sup>37</sup>"Behind the Revolution's Overthrow," pp. 758-759.

<sup>38</sup>Quoted in Paul McIsaac, "Revolutionary Suicide," *Village Voice*, November 22, 1983, p. 13.

<sup>39</sup>In an undated, confidential resolution, *Central Committee Resolution on Agriculture*, Control Number 100310, the NJM took the position that all lands taken over by the government should be put under the control of the Grenada Farm Corporation.

<sup>40</sup>Munroe, p. 80.

## Chapter 5

### "A BIG REVOLUTION IN A SMALL COUNTRY"

#### *The Collapse of the Revolution*

Maurice Bishop left on a trip to Hungary and Czechoslovakia the day after the meeting of the Central Committee at which he agreed to joint leadership. He returned to the Caribbean by way of Cuba, arriving in Havana on October 9. According to Fidel Castro, Bishop made no mention of the difficulties the New Jewel Movement was experiencing.<sup>1</sup> When Bishop returned to Grenada and was not met by the usual entourage at Pearl's Airport, it was immediately obvious that the crisis had not been resolved. Four days later, on October 12, the party's Political Bureau was scheduled to meet, and Bishop requested the question of implementing the joint leadership plan be placed on the agenda. According to Hugh O'Shaughnessy, however, the pro-Coard group interpreted this request "as a move to reopen party decisions and reject the concept of democratic centralism."<sup>2</sup> As a result, the crisis resumed at a fever pitch.

The Political Bureau and then the larger Central Committee met on the 12th of October. In the meantime, a rumor circulated through St. George's that Coard was planning to have Bishop assassinated. Even though a message by Bishop denying this was broadcast on Radio Free Grenada on the morning of October 13, Bishop was placed under house arrest, suspected of being the source of this damaging speculation. Word of the arrest, according to O'Shaughnessy, "went round Grenada with the force of a hurricane." On Thursday, October 13, at a special party meeting attended by some 250 members, Bishop was stripped of his positions and expelled from the NJM.<sup>3</sup>

Discussion between the pro-Bishop members of the Central Committee, George Louison and Unison Whiteman, and Bishop's antagonists, Bernard Coard and Selwyn Strachan, ended in

failure on the afternoon of Tuesday, October 18. Around 11 a.m. the next day, a huge crowd released Bishop from house arrest. At first it seemed that a rally was to be held at Market Square but instead the prime minister and a relatively small contingent drove off to Fort Rupert in a apparent effort to set up an interim organizational center. But not enough time was available for them to do so. Even as their initial efforts were made, four armored cars were already on their way to the Fort at the direction of the Coard-dominated Central Committee. The vehicles which were to fire on Bishop and his followers arrived around 1:00 p.m. With the killings that followed, as O'Shaughnessy puts it, "the followers of Bernard Coard had aborted the Grenadian revolution."<sup>4</sup>

The Americans never attacked the Grenada Revolution. A week later, on Thursday, October 27, when the first contingent of American troops landed, the revolution was already over. The Revolutionary Military Council (RMC), under the leadership of Hudson Austin, which established itself in the aftermath of the shootings at Fort Rupert, had no popular mandate and represented a forcible imposition on the Grenada population. Most importantly of all, it was responsible for the murder of the popular revolutionary, Bishop. As a result, it was viewed as alien and its rule was seen as intolerable. The RMC perhaps could have sustained itself for a short period, and it might have wreaked more violence on the Grenadian people than it had already done. But its life would have been a short one, so intense was the combined internal and external pressure against it. Bernard Coard was almost certainly wrong when he told Louison, in the course of their negotiations, that a civil war would not occur because the people "could stay in the streets for weeks but after a while they are bound to get tired and hungry and want peace."<sup>5</sup> The RMC's isolation would have resulted in its own demoralization, making it extremely difficult to maintain a facade of authority.

There is no doubt, however, that the RMC possessed the ability, in the meantime, to impose more grief on Grenada. This undoubtedly is the reason that the American intervention in Grenada was widely supported on the island as a "rescue" mission. For in fact, given the nature of the post-Bishop government, the American military presence did represent a reassurance for the many potential victims of the Coard/Austin regime. That the intervention was popular is beyond dispute and is a measure of

the extent to which the revolution was a part of the past at the time the Americans landed.

### *Lessons for the Left*

Gordon K. Lewis, in discussing the lessons to be learned from the Grenada experience, noted the paradox that even as Moscow's domination of Western European Communist parties declined in the years after World War II, that same kind of influence "received new life in many of the new Third World Countries." Grenada, writes Lewis, "built up the paraphernalia of a left-wing authoritarian state in the name of Leninism." He approvingly cites the French Caribbean socialist Jean Girard, who wrote that in the PRG there was "the blindness of dogmatism which transforms reality in the name of the 'scientific' approach." Lewis concludes that "the supreme lesson" that the Caribbean Left should learn from the experience in Grenada is that "socialism must go hand in hand with democracy."<sup>6</sup>

In fact, at least one Left party in the region has partially made the kind of reassessment which Lewis calls for. Guyana's Working People's Alliance (WPA) has issued a critique of the Grenada Revolution on what would have been the fifth anniversary of the Revolution, March 12, 1984. The WPA opposes the government of Forbes Burnham but represents a different political tendency than that associated with the Moscow-oriented People's Progressive Party. The WPA is the group which was headed by Walter Rodney until his assassination in June 1980; it has a well-earned reputation for independent, radical thought. Thus its reaction to the debacle in Grenada and the lessons it derives from that experience are of interest in assessing the performance of the PRG.

The WPA fundamentally supported the Grenada Revolution. The critique comments:

... the NJM and the PRG helped to spread the spirit of unity and liberation throughout the Caribbean. For the first time in this generation, in the English-speaking Caribbean there was a ceaseless stream of activity and propaganda in favour of Caribbean unity and dignity sponsored by a government and involving the People.

Above all, asserts the WPA, Grenada's PRG was a reminder of the authenticity of a Caribbean revolutionary tradition. Grenada, it declares, "reminds us that we need not go too far

beyond ourselves and our own idiom for instruction in revolutionary standards."<sup>7</sup>

But of course it is this last issue which is salient in assessing Grenada's experience. Ultimately, the issue which must be addressed is whether, in adopting the ideology of Marxism-Leninism as interpreted by Moscow-oriented parties, the leadership of the NJM really did serve the best interests of Caribbean liberation. Precisely the problem, as formulated by the WPA, is whether the NJM did go too far beyond the region and its idiom in searching for instruction in revolutionary standards. It is to the credit of the WPA that it raised this issue, though as we shall see, it fails to provide an unambiguous answer to this central problem of revolutionary practice.

The key paragraph in the WPA's assessment reads:

It does not seem to the WPA that the NJM leadership was in error to accept a Marxist-Leninist ideology. The failing was, for many in the leadership, to make this narrow, rather than widen, the possibilities and choices. This was compounded by the belief that such an outlook committed it to the foreign policy concerns of the socialist bloc and to a vanguard position on those issues.<sup>8</sup>

In the text which follows, the WPA builds on this formulation in three specific areas. First, it is clear that the WPA believes that Grenada, under the NJM, was mistaken in becoming a forceful and prominent player in international affairs. Unless small countries like Grenada are "subject to threat and aggression they should resist becoming champions or leaders against imperialism." Second, it is also clear that the WPA believes that the PRG should have held elections. It writes that "the leadership of the Grenada revolution for too long set its face against its early commitment to constitutional government." There is a third criticism which is set in general terms but which the WPA seems to wish to apply to Grenada specifically. The WPA reports that frequently when the leadership of a party accepts Marxism-Leninism, it comes mistakenly to believe that the time is ripe to construct socialism "regardless of the level of development and the fulfillment of other preconditions." Grenada by name is not mentioned, but the attempt to try to do too much, asserts the WPA, "is being repeated and re-enacted again and again in the Third World."<sup>9</sup>

If indeed this last criticism is directed to the Grenada Revolution, it almost certainly is misconceived. The NJM, in accept-

ing the doctrine of the non-capitalist path or socialist orientation, committed itself to the view that it was premature to construct socialism in the country. The theorists of this approach, Solodovnikov and Bogoslovsky, argue that "a country that sets out on the road of non-capitalist development rejects capitalism as a system, but has not yet created the conditions necessary for effecting socialist transformations."<sup>10</sup> As we have seen, it was in using this approach that the leadership of the NJM was able to defend its choice of a "mixed economy," one in which there continued to be a substantial role for the private sector. Far from there being a precipitous move to socialism, even large landholdings in Grenada remained untouched, and despite the establishment of a state trading corporation, Hugh O'Shaughnessy reports that the bulk of foreign trade remained in the hands of traditional merchant houses.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, if a criticism is to be made of the non-capitalist path, it is that it almost completely lacks substance and provides next to no insight or guidance in the formation of policy. Aside from its emphasis on the state sector as opposed to the private sector, it lacks specificity with regard either to the content of economic development or strategies to achieve that end. There is nothing in the non-capitalist path which, for example, would have warned the PRG that its emphasis on tourism was misplaced and that in pursuing it, the country would not be moving towards greater autonomy and development.

The remaining criticisms raised by the WPA, however, are not so easily dismissed. They concern the interrelated problems of Leninism, electoral democracy, and foreign policy. Specifically, the major problematic is the extent to which a commitment to the first precludes the second and dictates the formulation of the third. The WPA's position is that acceptance of Leninism does not require a party to eschew electoral processes and does not require it to be on the ideological frontier in its articulation of an anti-imperialist, pro-socialist, foreign policy. Indeed, the WPA itself as a political organization claims that it embodies all of these principles. It is a Marxist-Leninist party which does not support a one-party state and believes in free and fair elections.<sup>12</sup>

In its acceptance of Soviet ideological hegemony and its pursuit of acceptance by world Communist leaders, the NJM had no choice but to reject both WPA positions. Their view of Leninism was that the success of the Revolution required the continued

leadership of the vanguard party. In a volume studied by the NJM leadership, Pronin and Stepichev cite Lenin in arguing that "the working class could gain victory over the exploiters and fulfill its historical tasks of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and constructing socialism and communism only under the leadership of Communists . . ."<sup>13</sup> In this ideological context, elections which would allow an opposition to challenge the leadership role of the vanguard party were precluded. This is not to say that ultimately some form of an electoral mechanism might not have been put in place in Grenada. Indeed, in May 1983, a constitutional commission was established, and it was widely expected that the emerging constitution would include an electoral process. However, it is likely that the electoral system which would have been developed would have been patterned after Poder Populare in Cuba, a process which permits elections to assemblies but in which the dominant position of the Cuban Communist Party is not contested.

Similarly the logic of the world view accepted by the NJM required it to accept a foreign policy orientation contrary to that advocated by the WPA. In the ideological framework of Moscow-oriented Communist parties, foreign policy is very important. Raul Valdes Vivo, a member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, Grenada's principal mentor and advocate, has made this very clear. He writes:

The principle of proletarian internationalism provides the basis of the alliance of the communists with the national liberation movement. Disregard of this principle calls in question a party's affiliation to the communist orientation in the working-class struggle for emancipation.<sup>14</sup>

Foreign policy is one of the tests which must be passed in order to be accepted in the world movement. Thus Ambassador Richards reported from Moscow that "as far as our foreign policy is concerned our clear anti-imperialist stand is indisputable and our consistency on Afghanistan in particular must be appreciated although it has never been mentioned to me."<sup>15</sup> For the NJM, the forceful articulation of its foreign policy and support for the socialist bloc was necessary since it was in this way that it could bolster its claim to participation in the Communist movement. To follow the WPA's injunction in this regard and, for example, refrain from supporting the Soviet Union on the issue of Afghanistan would be to jeopardize any chance that party

might have had in accomplishing this fundamental goal.

### *The Lure of Paternalism*

It is clear therefore that the PRG was consistent in the policies which it followed. In this sense, the WPA presents too optimistic an assessment. The Leninism of the orthodox Communist parties does produce a narrowing of the alternatives which are available to policymakers. The world view associated with those parties dictates a specific pattern of domestic rule and foreign policy orientation. In response, therefore, to the question of why the NJM adopted a paternalistic mode of rule and a pro-Soviet foreign policy, the issue which must be addressed is why the party was attracted to the politics of the Soviet Union in the first place. The problem is to explain why, in Joanne Landy's words, "the Soviet model, tarnished though it is, exerts a powerful magnetism upon revolutionary leadership, many of whom end up hoping to emulate the USSR's social order . . ."<sup>16</sup>

Three factors seem to be of importance in producing this result. First, Landy herself points to the fact that the options available to such leaderships are narrow. There is, she writes, "no theory and viable alternative to the two dominant world systems."<sup>16</sup> With capitalism rejected because of the "ravages" it inflicts on people, the Soviet model becomes the alternative of choice. Other options are vague and undocumented and thus are suspect as a basis upon which to establish a system of rule. In this regard, it is clear that the Cuban Revolution was an important test case for the PRG leadership. The ruling party was impressed with the fact that the Cuban Revolution had not only survived in the face of American hostility but also had succeeded in providing for the basic needs of the Cuban people and had established a highly egalitarian distribution of wealth. Faced with the serious problems of governance, the party members must have been impressed that rule through a vanguard party in Cuba had produced stability and viability.

For the NJM leaders, the recipe to construct the kind of society they desired had already been written. Texts describing what was under construction and how to engage in its building were made available by the Russians. Over and over again, party members were exhorted to study these books. Furthermore, the Russians considered the sending of Grenadians to Party schools

in Moscow an important test of the NJM's commitment to the Soviet bloc. As a result, the NJM made a point of sending students to the Soviet Union where they were instructed in Leninist ideology. By studying, reading, and attending classes, NJM members were reinforced in their vanguard politics. This process reinforced their own sense of legitimacy in leadership and tended to bolster their commitment to the kind of paternalistic politics they were in fact studying.

In this regard, it is possible to construct a second hypothesis to account for the NJM's retreat from democracy to the paternalistic socialism associated with orthodox Communist parties. This concerns the social composition of the NJM itself. Members of the NJM constituted a privileged sector of Grenadian society. Bishop, Coard, Radix, Whiteman, Phyllis Coard and Jacqueline Creft all possessed university degrees, symbolizing a level of education far beyond that available to most people in Grenada.<sup>17</sup> The competence represented by the degree might have made it relatively easy for these and other comparably placed individuals to slip into a stance of benevolent paternalism with respect to the rest of the society. Especially this might have been the case when the Grenadian people did not respond as fully or as quickly to the NJM programs as the party's leaders might have desired. An explanation concerning such backwardness which emphasized the people's "false consciousness" might then have been attractive. If so, a vanguard party then might have suggested itself as the best means available to continue to work for the well-being of the society.

In accepting that political view, the NJM, like other Third World parties, expressed its own values and politics as well as reflecting the paucity of radical democratic models. It is not just that the vanguard model was available. It was that it and the values which lay behind it were congruent with the world view of those who accepted it. Political leaders who rejected paternalism would have had a very hard time accepting Leninist politics. Whether this would have lead them to construct a new model or retreat from the politics of revolution is not the point. The fact is that the model of Leninist paternalism was not inflicted on otherwise unwilling Third World leadership. Vanguard politics resonates with the view that such individuals possess of themselves and their world.

The NJM's 1973 Manifesto grew out of skepticism in the region concerning the Westminster model of electoral politics. But in attacking that model, critics failed to differentiate between the democratic values which are latent in an electoral system and the actual performance of that process. That such a distinction should be drawn stems from the fact that any system of politics is conditioned by the social context in which it is asked to perform. In the present-day Caribbean, the democratic values embodied in the Westminster model are much more accessible to urban elites than to the population in general. The problem quite specifically is that access to those rights is financially costly. Implicit in the model are the rights to mobilize politically, build coalitions, advance programs, and challenge for power. But the ability to organize, communicate, and contest for power all require financing. The result is that what is democratic in form typically is oligarchic in substance. The upshot is that only rarely can the Westminster model be pointed to as operationalizing a truly democratic politics, much less be used as a vehicle for achieving social change. The Westminster system in a class-stratified society is biased in favor of the elite and it is only in exceptional circumstances that the bias can be overcome.

But of course in Grenada after March 13, 1979, at least, using an electoral process to place in office individuals committed to radicalism was not the problem. The NJM was already in power and at that point, the problem was a different one. Now the issue became identifying the principles which were to undergird the new political system under construction. One path which the NJM could have chosen would have been to erect a politics designed to implement fully the long-deferred promise of the Westminster model. The system of village assemblies of the 1973 Manifesto could have been the basis upon which to construct such a politics. Certainly there was nothing in that document which precluded such a direction. The grass roots democracy possible in those assemblies, appropriately bolstered with guarantees enabling individuals to organize and communicate could well have served as vehicles to extend self-governance throughout the Grenadian society.

But instead the NJM chose and attempted to implement a political system in which a benevolent paternalism was the guiding principle. Rather than attempting to establish a politics of free association and voluntarism, the NJM adopted the stance



that the society should be led in the direction of an identifiable goal — socialism and, ultimately, communism — by a vanguard which possessed unique insight both with regard to the ends to be accomplished and the means to get there. The people were to be involved politically, but it was an involvement only under terms established by the ruling group and subject to the latter's monitoring. The intention of the system was benevolent. The NJM was not a self-aggrandizing or corrupt elite. It was, rather, a party convinced that there was a science to the leading of society and that if it mastered that science and did its job well, Grenada would benefit.

Finally, there is also the question of American foreign policy in explaining the attractiveness of the Moscow model. Students of American policy abroad have found that "there are only two specific core values that policy makers share and that thereby provide coherence for United States policy toward Latin America: anti-communism and for the property rights of liberal capitalism, involving free trade."<sup>18</sup> Especially since these core values are two sides of the same coin, American policy in the region can be seen for what it is: activity to preserve a political economy which at once will be compatible with that in the United States and which will provide American interests with relatively easy access to the region's resources, labor, and markets.

If this accurately describes the core of American foreign policy, then it follows that any effort to achieve greater autonomy and self-reliance in the region risks incurring American hostility. The reduction of dependency precisely is an attempt to reduce the extent to which American interests are at liberty to do what they will in the Caribbean. The curbing of such freedom might be to the benefit of a local private sector or in the name of the nation as a whole. But there can be no doubt that greater self-reliance in the Caribbean would come at the expense of at least some American interests. Thus some degree of conflict with the metropolitan power is an all but inevitable aspect of the search for greater autonomy in the Caribbean.

The likelihood of American hostility clearly will reinforce any predisposition which might exist to adopt a Leninist politics and association with the Soviet bloc. At the very least, the adopting of that model could be expected to produce diplomatic support. It might also result in the receiving of economic assistance. Finally, as occurred in the case of Cuba, in adopting a Soviet poli-

tics, a nation might be placed behind the defensive shield of the socialist countries. Thus it is that with the hostility of one super-power, a revolutionary society might be drawn to the other.

Clearly, each of these factors was at work propelling the Grenada Revolution to a paternalistic system of government allied with the Soviet Union. There was not present in the region a sufficient body of indigenous theory and practice to make credible an alternative vision other than that of orthodox Marxism-Leninism. Elitist politics were attractive to the revolutionary leaders precisely because those politics resonated with the self-perceptions of the relatively privileged and well-educated leadership of the NJM. Finally, the hostility of the American government almost literally from day one of the revolution further reinforced the view that only in alliance with the Soviet Union could the revolution be protected. Such an alliance, to some extent, necessitated that the PRG adopt Soviet methods. But the PRG was already committed to a vanguard politics and the party had no difficulty in accommodating to what it perceived to be Soviet desires and political preferences. Thus it is that the WPA call for a democratic Leninism in which foreign policy is played in a low key may be touched with naivete. There were in Grenada important forces, both internally and externally, pushing the NJM toward a paternalistic politics. This, in the context of the inevitable anti-revolutionary hostility of the United States, conspired to make foreign policy an important part of Grenada's revolutionary process.

### *Assessment*

In concluding his evaluation of the Grenada Revolution, Gordon K. Lewis writes that "no examination of the Grenada Revolution of 1979-83 should end on a pessimistic note." In this regard, he cites both Bernard Coard and Maurice Bishop as illustrating that "a small Caribbean mini-society showed that it could give birth to a quality of leadership and ability comparable to anything anywhere else." He then goes on to argue that the release of Bishop from the house arrest his own party had imposed on him is another cause for celebrating. For, according to Lewis, the release of Bishop represented "a spirited mass movement of protest and resistance unmatched by any other peo-



ple in the region" and, in that way, "added another glorious chapter to the history of Caribbean revolutionary resistance."<sup>19</sup>

This may not seem like a pessimistic assessment to Lewis. But when heroic revolutionary action involves a pitched clash between the people and the revolutionary vanguard party, clearly something had gone wrong. It was just that action on October 19, 1983, symbolizing both the continued activism of the Grenadian people and their ultimate rejection of the leadership of the NJM which captures the tragedy and failure of the Grenada Revolution.

What was wrong with the Grenada Revolution was that, for all its good work in the area of social welfare, it had not constructed institutions capable of accommodating political disagreement. This was true within the ruling party, but more importantly, it was also the case more generally in the society. As a result, for the people of Grenada to express themselves in October 1983 required that they take to the streets, just as the NJM had taught them to do during the 1970s. The problem this time, however, was that the anger of the people was turned against what remained of that party and in the absence of any other organized group to which they could turn. The benevolent paternalism associated with the PRG had precluded institutionalizing channels of self-expression and dissent. Thus when the party itself ruptured, there were no political mechanisms available through which the Revolution could be salvaged. The pro-Coard group within the NJM had emerged triumphant from the internecine conflict. Because of its association with the deaths of Bishop and his supporters, it did not possess the popular mandate which could have allowed it to rule. Neither was it possible for any other group to claim that mandate because no organized politics outside the party had been permitted under NJM rule. Politics had never been allowed to take on a life of its own under the Grenada Revolution. And so it was that when the party splintered, the Revolution shattered.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Speech by Fidel Castro, November 14, 1983, as reprinted in *Cuba Update*, Vol. IV, No. 5 (November 1983), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Hugh O'Shaughnessy, *Grenada: Revolution, Invasion and Aftermath* (London: Sphere Books Limited, 1984), p. 122.

<sup>3</sup>O'Shaughnessy, p. 127.

<sup>4</sup>O'Shaughnessy, p. 138.

<sup>5</sup>"Interviewing George Louison, A PRG Minister Talks about the Killings," *Caribbean Review*, Vol. XII, No. 4, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup>Gordon K. Lewis, "The Lessons of Grenada for the Caribbean Left," *Caribbean Contact*, July 1984, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup>Working People's Alliance, *Grenada and The Caribbean* (Georgetown, Guyana: March 13, 1984), pp. 4, 8.

<sup>8</sup>Working People's Alliance, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup>Working People's Alliance, pp. 2, 3.

<sup>10</sup>V. Solodovnikov and V. Bogoslovsky, *Non-Capitalist Development: An Historical Outline*, p. 101.

<sup>11</sup>O'Shaughnessy, p. 110.

<sup>12</sup>Letter from Eusi Kwayana and Rupert Roopnarine, Co-Chair, WPA, *Catholic Standard* (Georgetown, Guyana), March 4, 1984.

<sup>13</sup>I. Pronin and M. Stepichev, *Leninist Standards of Party Life* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), p. 8.

<sup>14</sup>Raul Valdes Vivo, "The Cuban Variant," *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (February 1983), p. 44.

<sup>15</sup>Embassy of Grenada in the USSR, *Relations with The CPSU*, Control Number 102329, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup>Joanne Landy, "How the Cold War Works and Who's To Blame," *In These Times*, July 11-24, 1984, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup>EPICA Task Force, *Grenada: The Peaceful Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: EPICA Task Force, 1982), p. 52.

<sup>18</sup>Lars Schoultz, *Human Rights and United States Policy Toward Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 366.

<sup>19</sup>Lewis, p. 8.

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